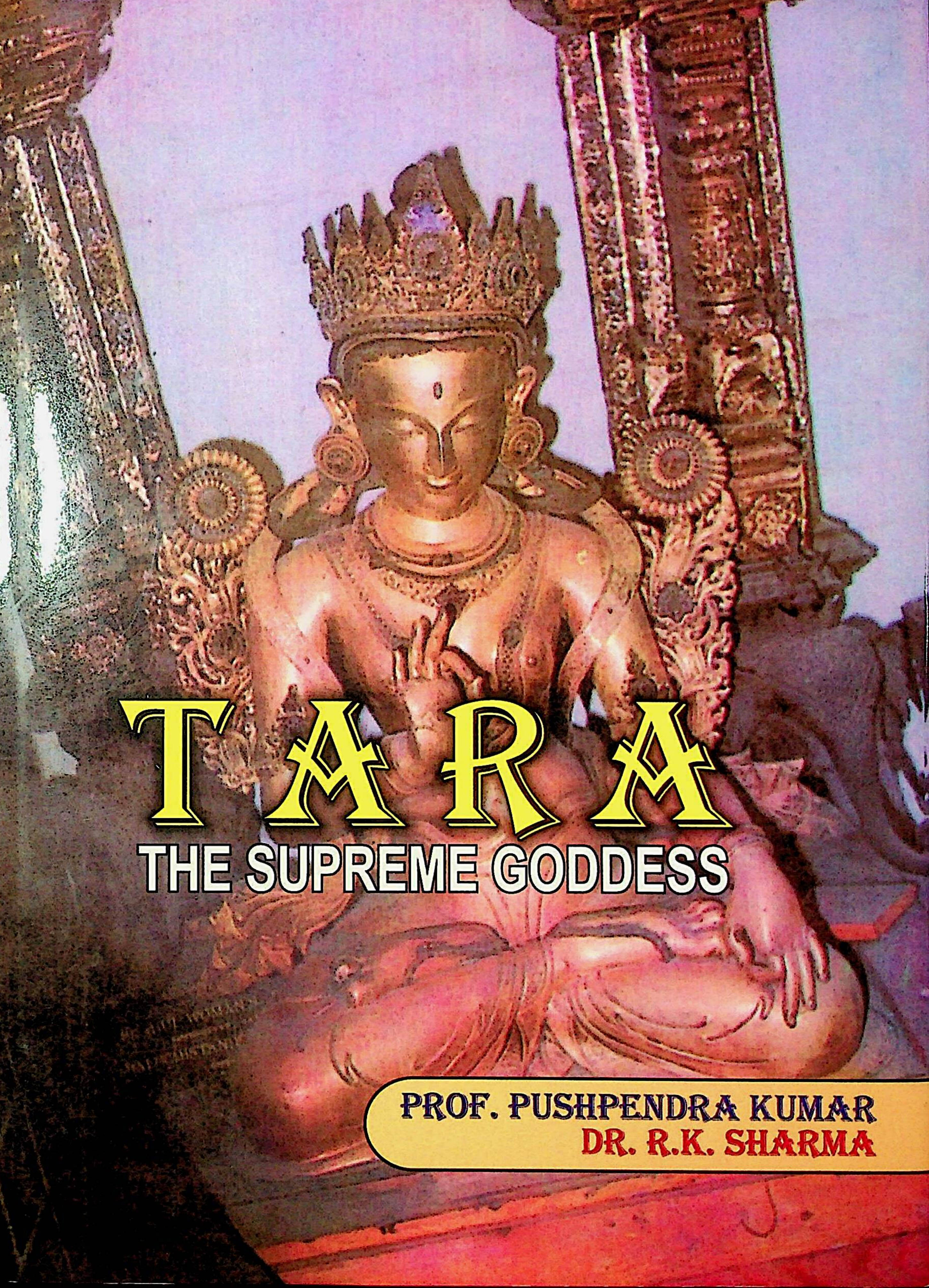

TARA

THE SUPREME GODDESS

PROF. PUSHPENDRA KUMAR
DR. R.K. SHARMA

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TĀRĀ
THE SUPREME GODDESS

PROF. PUSHPENDRA KUMAR
Deptt. of Sanskrit
University of Delhi

Foreword by:
DR. R.K. SHARMA
Ex-Vice Chancellor,
Darbhanga Sanskrit University, Darbhanga
Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi

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Mob. : 9415202477, 7985892725, 9453040794
E-mail:arunjainbvp@gmail.com

5824, New Chandrawal, Near Shiv Mandir,
Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110007
Ph. : (011) 23851570, Mob. : 9810910450, 8700588570

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Foreword

Tantra represents one of the most significant integrating factors of the Vedic and Buddhist tradition. The Buddhist concept of Tārā "the symbol of primordial female energy as the consort of Avalokiteśvara, the symbol of primordial male principle"—has played a vital role in this direction. It is, thus, quite in the fitness of things that Prof. Pushpendra Kumar has been able to bring out this illustrious volume entitled 'Tārā—the Supreme Goddess'.

The volume deals with all the important aspects of Tārā, specially origin of Tārā Cult, forms and iconography of Tārās including the forms as found in Hindu Tantra, popularity of Tārā cult in the various parts of the country and abroad and Rituals of Tārā Cult.

This is perhaps the first attempt of its kind. I am quite sure, Indologists all over the world will welcome this laudable venture of Prof. Pushpendra Kumar.

R K. Sharma
Ex-Vice Chancellor
Darbhanga Sanskrit University &
Sampurnanand Sanskrit University
ex-Joint Secretary—Ministry of Education
ex-Director, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan.

Preface

From the beginning of the Christian era, the popular cults of the Female principle were gradually becoming the driving force even in the case of the higher religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism etc. In the Gupta period the deities were worshipped along with their consorts. Buddhism changed qualitatively from the pristine simplicity of an austere moral code to the most complex system of Mahāyāna. The older form of Buddhism lost its hold upon the people giving way to a new movement, the Mahāyāna. The followers of Mahāyāna regarded the Buddha as eternal, without origin and decay and beyond any description whatsoever. Speculations regarding the Buddha's body gave currency to the Trikāya conception and later on was developed into a regular Mahāyāna Pantheon. The five Dhyāni Buddhas alongwith the Bodhisattvas and Śaktis or goddesses were said to have issued out of Ādi Buddha. Of the Bodhisattvas, the cults of Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of compassion and Manjusri, the personification of wisdom, became popular in the Gupta age. with the former was associated the Goddess Tārā and subsequent Buddhism came under the complete grip of the Tārā cult.

The Āryans did not admit the feminine principle in their worship until civilization in India had become more refined, but, at the same time. Brahmā was given a feminine counterpart—Sarasvati, goddess of Speech and Learning and patroness of the Arts and Sciences. Viṣṇu received as consort the goddess of Love and Beauty, Lakṣmī; while the Mahā-Devi, Pārvati, whose ferocious forms were Durgā and Kāli, goddess of Death, became the Śakti of Śiva.

The Mahāyāna school had also its period of the exclusive adoration of the male principle, from the first to the middle of the fourth century A.D., at which epoch the Yoga system was grafted on to the Northern Buddhist school by Āsanga. The adoration of the feminine principle was introduced in the form of the goddess Tārā. In the seventh century she took on two distinct forms, and in the succeeding centuries her forms multiplied, forming a group of twenty-one Tārās. Other goddesses, also having the rank of Bodhisattva, made their appearance, but none of them gained the popularity of Tārā.

By the seventh century the influence of the Tantra system had begun to weaken the austerity of the Northern Buddhist school and not only Tantra, but ferocious forms of the goddesses appear, and the adoration of the śakti, or female energy of a god, was introduced, and the 'green' Tārā was declared the śakti of Avalokiteśvara.

Gradually the popular belief throughout Tibet and Mangolia developed in favour of the view that a god was more disposed to listen to and grant their requests when worshipped along with his śakti. As a result, nearly every god was given a female energy, who was represented with him in the yab-yum (Mithuna) attitude.

There are three forms of feminine divinities: goddesses with a rank of Bodhisattva, Śaktis, and Dākinis.

The goddssses are divided into two classes, the pacific and the angry. The pacific goddesses are generally represented seated, and wear the Bodhisattva ornaments, including the five-leaved crown. They are of smiling expression, and usually have the urna on the forehead. Their hair are long and wavy. The angry goddesses, with dishevelled hair, the third eye, and Tantra ornaments and attributes, resemble the Dharmapāla form of the gods.

The śaktis are rarely represented alone, but in the embrace of the gods, and are of pacific or angry form according to the god with whom they are represented. They are generally covered at the hips by a tiger-skin or lion skin, and have either Bodhisattva ornaments or Tantra ornaments and attributes.

The dākinis are divinities of lesser rank and are generally represented standing in a dancing attitude. Although they may have either pacific or angry forms, they are always represented with Tantra ornaments and attributes, and generally carry the khaṭvānga, or magic stick claimed to have been invented by Padmasambhava. The Dākinis are believed to have given to the guru Padmasambhava the books, written in an unknown language, on which he is said to have founded the doctrines, preached in Tibet.

The most popular Buddhist goddess, as is well known, is Tārā. She should not be confused with her namesake, the spouse of Amoghasiddhi. Tārā as spouse of Amoghsiddhi sits in Lalitāsana with one leg pendant,—her right hand in the Vara-mudrā and left in the Vitarka-mudrā. On her two sides two lotus flowers rise up to her shoulders and each of them supports a double Vajra. But she is very seldom met with.

The Tārās ordinarily met with, are grouped into five classes according to the colour of their body, which they derive from their parental Dhyānī Buddhas, each of whom, it will be remembered, has a distinct colour of his own. Thus there are five varieties of Tārās:— White, Blue, Yellow, Red and Green respectively. Getty says (p. 103) that they are believed to be the Śaktis of the Dhyāni Buddhas from whom they originated. Perhaps the more probable and provable theory is that they are the Śaktis of the Bodhisattvas originating from the same deity. The same emanation dividing itself into the male and the female energies.

From the principle enunciated above, the principal goddesses may be grouped as below:—

From Vairochana—White Tārā and Uṣṇīṣavijayā.
(White—Jāngulī—TĀRĀ. MĀRICHI.

From Akṣobhya—Nīla Tārā or Ekajatā.

From Ratnasambhava—Yellow Tārā. Vasudhārā.
(Yellow)—Vajra Tārā.

From Amitābha—Rakta Tārā or Kurukullā, Sitātapatrā.
(Red) Bhṛkuṭi.

From Amoghasiddhi—Green Tārā, Parṇaśabarī.
(Green)

The position of the important Goddess Sarasvatī, who was certainly an importation from Brahmanism, is, like her consort Manjusri, somewhat individualistic. She appears to be sometimes identified with ĀRYĀ JĀNGULĪ, a form of white Tārā and the milk-white colour of her body may also have drawn her to the fold of Vairochana. This type of Buddhist sculpture is placed in the Dacca Museum.

The Buddhist goddess—Tārā is the goddess of compassion. She is considered to be the consort of Avalokiteśwara, the Bodhisattva of mercy. She is an important deity in the Buddhist Pantheon, widely worshipped during the early medieval periods of Indian History, ranging from 6th century A.D. to 12th century AD. Her worship was not confined only to India (including Nepal), but spread to other extra-Indian territories as well. It was widespread in India, China, Tibet, Mangolia, Ceylon, Burma, Japan and Indonesian countries

A large number of sculptural and painted respresentations of Tārā have been discovered in India and outside. Iconographically, they are of numerous varieties. The different forms and names of Tārā are mentioned. Tārā in her early and simple form is endowed with two hands and is generally found seated, while Medieval images of Tārā are usually found standing. Earliest possible sculptures of Tārā are found in the Ellora caves (numbering 25) which is assigned to the 6th century AD. In the Kanheri caves also Tārā is there, which is assigned to 5th century AD, but this date is not beyond doubt. Some recent researches have shown that the Nāgarjuni Kondā ruins, belonging to the 3rd century AD, also had an image of the goddess Tārā.

It may be noted that a good number of sculptural representations of Tārā have been found in the Buddhist caves of Western Deccan such as Ellora, Aurangabad, Kanheri, Nasik and others. All these images are, however, of placid form. This shows that the deity and her cult was popular in that part of country. On the other hand she was popular in Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Tibet and Nepal, which means that the eastern part of the country was worshipping this deity. She is considered the deity of navigation in special and the deity of protection in general.

Tārā, the Merciful One, is born from a tear of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Merciful Lord. She symbolizes compassion and guides the travellers across the infinite ocean of transmigrations. She is Tārā, the brilliant one. the star that guides the navigator on his voyage. Together with Avalokiteśvara she is the protector of mankind and when invoked saves people from multitudes of dangers. She is the Princess Bhaṭṭārikā, and as such wears the princely attire of a Bodhisattva. Her favourite residence is Mount Potala, from whose heights she looks over the suffering of this world.

Tārā is the principal feminine deity of Buddhism of later days. With the spreading of Śaivaistic influences among Buddhists, numerous other goddesses of the Hindu pantheon were admitted into the religious system of the Mahāyāna and with the advent of a strong current of religious syncretism, they were proclaimed to be the different aspects of Tārā, the Saviouress. Under the influence of pious adoration, her character gradually transformed itself and she assumed the aspect of a Goddess, Mother of all the jinas (Tib. rGyal-yum), and she is addressed in prayers and songs composed in her honour.

Tārā adopts the five sacred colors and her ardent devotee, the Kasmirian poet Sarvajñamitra, tells us that the merciful goddess can be seen red as the sun, blue as the sapphire, white as the foam of the ocean, or brilliant as the sparkling of gold. The same poet sings in the ecstasy of his devotion: 'Thy universal form is similar to the crystal which becomes transformed in its aspects, when things round it are changed'.

Tārā is the feminine energy of Avalokiteśvara. Like him, she is compassinate and succouring. She is the "Saviour", and the "Giver" of favours. She who brings through evil passes Protectress of navigation and travels. She also guides beings upon the path of Emancipation. Her shapes were multiplied under the influence of the Tantric doctrines which developed the cult of the feminine divinities.

Most frequently she has the appearance of a Bodhisattva. Seated in Indian fashion or standing, she makes the gesture of charity. Her tiara is adorned with the image of a Dhyāni-Buddha. She holds the blue lotus (utpala) in her left hand. She is frequently found beside Avalokiteśvara, in the attitude of adoration.

TĀRĀ (The Saviouress)

(T.) sgrol-ma (dol-ma), or rol-ma (the Saviouress).

(M.) dara eke (Tārā, the mother).

(C.) To-lo.

(J.) To-tara-ni-bi, or Tārā bosatsu.

Mudrā: vitarka (argument).
vara (charity).

Symbol: padma (lotus) Colour: white or green.

Tantra forms: blue, yellow, or red

Consort of Avalokiteśvara: white.

Śakti of Avalokiteśvara: green.

Different names: Jānguli, Ekajatā, Bhrikuti, Kurukullā, Sitatarā, & others.

The goddess Tārā was enrolled among the Northern Buddhist gods in the sixth century. A.D. By the seventh century, according to Hsuan Tsang there were many statues of Tārā in Northern India. Between the eighth and twelfth centuries her popularity equalled that of any god in the Māhayāna pantheon. Many temples and Viharas were dedicated to her, and there was hardly a household altar without a statue of Tārā. Her worship extended to Java, where a temple was dedicated to her about 779 A.D. But neither Tārā nor any other goddess was worshipped in Ceylon or Burma because the Southern Buddhist school never adopted the worship of the feminine divinities.

'Tārā', the Sanskrit name of the goddess, is derived from the root 'tar' (to cross). In other words, Tārā helps to cross the Ocean of Existence. The Tibetan translation of 'Tārā' is sgrol-ma (pro. dol-ma), which means 'saviouress'. Her Mengolian name 'Dara eke' means 'Tārā the mother', and she is called the 'mother of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas'. The faithful may appeal to her directly without the intermediary of a lama, which is not the case with other deities of first rank, and possibly accounts for her great popularity.

Her titles are to the mystic number of 108, and the manual of worship of Tārā is commonly found throughout Tibet. It is called the 'Praises and Spells (dhārani) of the pure; original Tārā', and is believed to have been written by the Dhyāni-Buddha Vairocana; but the author was more probably the monk Vairocana, who lived in the eighth century.

There are many legends in regard to the origin of Tārā, one of them being that she was born from a blue ray that shone from the eye of Amitābha. The generally accepted legend, however, is that a tear fell from the eye of the god of Avalokiteśvara, and, falling in the valley beneath, formed a lake. From the waters of the lake arose a lotus-flower, which opening its petals, disclosed the pure goddess Tārā.

The Lamas believe that Tārā was incarnate in all good women, and in the seventh century they declared the two pious wives of the Tibetan Buddhist king, SRong-tsansgam-po.

incarnations of Tārā. She was then given two distinct forms: the 'white', believed to be incarnate in the Chinese princess Wen-cheng, daughter of a Chinese King belonging to the Imperial family; and the 'green', incarnate in the Nepalese princess Bribsun, daughter of the Newar king Amsu Varman. The white and green Tārās thus became two distinct deities. The former was given as symbol the full-blown white lotus, while the latter carried the utpala, or blue lotus with the petals closed.

As the lotus opens by day and closees by night, the white Tārā with the full-blown lotus, and the black Tārā with the utpala having its petals closed, may symbolize 'day' and 'night'. Or in other words, since they were born from the tears shed by Avalokiteśvara, they may represent his never-ceasing grief at the miseries of mankind. Or they might also symbolize the willingness of Tārā to soothe human suffering by day as well as by night, for it is believed that Avalokiteśvara imposed her that duty.

In support of the above hypothesis, M. de Blonay mentions a representation of Tārā found in a Jain temple in the fort of Dambal. She is seated, holding a full-blown lotus in her hand. To the right is a sun, to the left a moon, under which is a standing figure holding a lotus with its hand in namaskāra (prayer) mudrā. In the library of the Institute de France there is a temple-painting of Padmapāni, with the sun emanating from the right eye and the moon from the left (see Padmapani with twelve emanations). The white Tārā was born from a tear which fell from the right eye, and the green Tārā from a tear from the left eye of Avalokiteśvara. It is also interesting to note that the second Tārā in the group of twenty—one Tārās is called 'of white--moon brightness', and that the seventeenth Tārā carries a sun and a moon.

The Tantric forms of Tārā made their appearance when the Northern Buddhist school became weakened by the pernicious influence of the Tantra system. The ferocious forms of the goddess were represented in three colours: red, yellow and blue. These, with the white and green colours of pacific forms, completed the five colour of the five Dhyāni-Buddhas of whom they were believed to be the śaktis.

In the collection of Tibetan temple pictures belonging to M. Bacot, there is a painting of Tārā with 'one thousand heads and arms'. The heads are arranged in two rows on either side of the central row, superposed one above the other ad infinitum, and the five rows are painted green, red, white, yellow, and blue. She is represented standing, which is very rare in Tibetan representations of the goddess.

The Tārās are generally seated, but if they accompany Avalokiteśvara, or any other important god, they are usually standing. Tārā may be surrounded by her own different manifestations as well as by other gods.

The non-Tantric forms of Tārā wear all the Bodhisattva ornaments, and are smiling and graceful. Their hair is abundant and wavy. The Tantric Tārās wear the ornaments and symbols of the Dharmapāla, with the hair dishevelled and having third eye.

The details of the worship of Tārā are to be found in the Tārā-tantra, published by the Varendra-Research Society of Rajsahi and in the 4th chapter of the Mantra-mahodadhi-tantra. Tārā-tantra quotes (Pages 11-12, footnote) an explanation of the image of Tārā from Tārārahasya-vṛttikā, and Mantramahodadhi has a more concise invocation in verse. It appears from these that Ugra-Tārā should be represented standing on a white lotus rising from the depths of all-pervading waters. She should have the Knife, the Sword, the Blue Lotus and the Skull as attributes in her four hands. She should have three bloodshot eyes, diverse ornaments as well as snakes decorating her body, the colour of which should be thrown up in a single braid. Her tongue should protrude out and her teeth should be prominent, giving a terrible appearance to her countenance. Her waist should be covered by the hide of an elephant. She should wear a necklace of skulls. Her brow should be adorned with a flat piece of white bone. An image of Śiva (Akṣobhya) should be on her head, and she should have firm breasts and a smiling expression. She should tread on a corpse placed between two lotuses.

The Tārā of Sikarpur shows nearly all the above particulars and five miniatures are depicted above her head. The topmost one is of Śiva. To his right is Brahmā, and to his left are the figures of the Kārttikeya and Ganeśa. The remaining figure is probably of Viṣṇu. The pedestal depicts six votaries, some male and some female. A maid appears on either side of the goddess.

A perusal of the explanation of the Tārā image, as well as a study of the image described above gives rise to a strong presumption that this Ugra Tārā of the Brahmanical pantheon is a direct importation from the Buddhist, viz colour, attributes, parental Buddha Akṣobhya, and all. The arrangement of the five miniatures over the head of Ugra-Tārā is also reminiscent of the five Dhyāni Buddhas of the Buddhistic images. Akṣobhya, the Buddha from whom Ugra-Tārā emanates is explained as the one whom no commotion can disturb, i.e. Śiva; and thus he passes without question on the crest of the Tārā of the Brahmanical Pantheon.

In the Mahāyanic Buddhist texts we come across an abundance of goddesses, since Mahāyānism represents the popular aspects of Buddhism. In different ramifications of Mahāyānism, the goddesses came to exert an ever-increasing influence. The Ādi Buddha of the Vajrayāna group found a consort in Prajnāpāramitā known by many other names. His emanations, the Dhyāni Buddhas, had each obtained a divine consort or Śakti of his own, namely Vajrasattvātmikā, Locanā, Māmaki, Pāndarā and Ārya-Tārā respectively. The

Kālacakrayāna introduced a host of awe-inspiring and terrible goddess, dreadful fiends known as Dākinis, to be appeased with mantra, magic circles, offerings and sacrifices. Later Buddhism is, in fact, nothing but a disguised Tantric cult of the Female Principle. Earlier Mahāyānic texts initiate the cult of the Female Principle and in the texts of Tantric Buddhism like the Guhyasamāja or the Manjusrimūla kalpa, we come across a well developed form of this cult. The Sādhanamālā is the most valuable work on Buddhist iconology which records the latest advances in Vajrayāna doctrines. The Nispanna-yogāvali is a work on the Maṇḍalas and is remarkable for its richness of information. It contains in all twenty-six Mandalas in twenty-six chapters, all these Maṇḍalas describing numerous deities of Tantric Buddhism. Besides these, other works. such as the Heruka Tantra and Hevajra Tantras, Caṇḍamahārosana-tantra, Vajravārāhi-tantra, Kriyāsamuccaya, Vajrāvali-nāma-mandalopayika, Yoginijāla-tantra, Abhidhānottara-tantra, etc., throw a flood of light on the Buddhist goddesses. The Advaya-vajrasamgraha, edited by M.M. Haraprasad Sastri, should also be mentioned in this connection.

A number of gods and goddesses are described in the Manjusrimūla kalpa which is believed to be an earlier work than the Guhyasamāja, but it is in the latter work that we come across for the first time the idea of a complete pantheon, five Dhyāni Buddhas, their mantras, their maṇḍalas and their śaktis or female counterparts. The Dhyāni Buddhas are described as the progenitors of the five Kulas or families of gods and goddesses. In later texts things are more systematized, but the number and attributes of the deities increased. In Vajrayāna, the highest god is Ādi-Buddha or Vajradhara, whose doctrine is explained in Kālacakra-tantra, is the embodiment of Śūnya to whom the Dhyāni Buddhas owe their origin. His Śakti or female counterpart is Prajnāpāramitā often represented in yab-yum, in close embrace with her male partner. The Dhyāni Buddhas and their Śaktis are mentioned in detail in the Guhyasamāja. Pāndarā or Pāndaravāsini is the Śakti of Amitābha, Māmaki of Akṣobhya, Locanā of Vairocana, Tārā of Amoghasiddhi, Vajradhātvisvari of Ratnasambhava and Vajrasattvātmikā of Vajrasattva. Next come the mortal Buddhas and their Śaktis. The Hinayanists recognise twenty-four bygone Buddhas. The Mahāyānists have several lists from which thirty-two different names have been recovered. The last seven are Vipasyin, Śikhi, Visvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kasyapa and Śakyasimha and their Śaktis are Vipasyanti, Śikhimālini, Visvadhara, Kakudvati, Kanthamālini, Mahidharā and Yasodharā respectively. Besides the Dhyāni and Mānusi (mortal) Buddhas there are Bodhisattvas and their Śaktis. The Bodhisattvas represent a class of deities who derive their origin from the Dhyāni Buddhas and their female counterparts are known by the general name of Śaktis.

The female divinities that emanate from the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha are three in number—Kurukullā, Bhrkuti and Mahāsitavati. Emanations of Akṣobhya are the goddesses Mahācinatārā, Jānguli, Ekajatā, Vidyujjwālakarāli, Parnasābari, Prajnapāramitā, Vajracarcikā, Mahāmantrānusārini, Mahāpratyangirā, Dhvajāgrakeyura, Vasudhārā, Nairatmā, Jnanadākini and Vajravidārani. Emanations of Vairocana are Mārici, Usnisavijayā, Sitātapatrā Aparājitā, Mahāsahasrapramardani, Vajravārāhi, Cuṇḍā and Grahamātrikā, of Amoghasiddhi Khadiravāni Tārā, Mahāsri Tārā, Vasya Tārā, Ṣadbhujā Sitatārā, Dhanada Tārā, Sita Tārā, Parnaśābari, Mahāmayuri, Vajrasṛmkhalā and Vajragāndhari, and of Ratnasambhava Vajratārā, Mahāpratisarā, Vasudhārā, Aparājitā, Vajrayogini and Prasanna Tārā.

The Buddhist goddesses, although many of them like Parnaśābari, etc., were adopted from tribal religious systems with which Mahayānism came in compromise, are basically different from the non-Buddhist goddesses in character and conception. They are mere abstractions of some ideas by which different forms of Buddhism are characterized. The tribal goddesses, stood for practical purposes. They represented facts of life. The Harappan Mother Goddess was basically an Earth—Mother presiding over the functions of generation and fertility. Even the Vedic goddesses represent different natural phenomena and concern themselves with physical, atmospheric and astral myths. The goddesses of the Epics and Purānas are syncretistic products, revealing in their conception a prolonged historical evolution. It is a fact that the existing cults of the Female Principle exerted a tremendous influence on Buddhism and practically saturated it. But the goddesses that were produced in Buddhism under such an influence lacked concreteness. The Buddhists started an unrelenting process of deification by turning all objects, cosmic and philosophical principles, literature, letters of the alphabet, the directions and even the desires into gods and goddesses, with forms, colour, poses of sitting, and weapons.

Next in rank, but not very widely represented is the group of the Divine Buddhaśaktis, five in number, to which sixth is added. The Buddhaśaktis affiliate themselves to their respective Dhyāni Buddhas, whose figures or images they generally bear on their crown. Cases in which they are represented on the stupas, in full form to the left of their husbands, are but more often their symbols or the Yantras are represented each on a slab in a niche. They occupy the corners intermediate between the four cardinal points taken up by the four or five Dhyāni Buddhas as the case may be. The Buddhaśaktis are:—

1. Vajradhātviśvari.
2. Locanā.
3. Māmaki.
4. Paṇḍarā.
5. Āryatārā.
6. Vajrasattvātmika.

Each Dhyāni Buddha has a Śakti or consort associated with him through whom a Divine Bodhisattva is brought forth. The Buddhaśaktis when sculptured or painted are represented in a sitting posture, mostly in Lalitāsana on a full blown lotus. The two hands generally hold a lotus each, while the left hand exhibiting the Abhaya pose and the right resting on the right foreleg. The figure wears a peticoat fastened round the loins and a tightfitting jacket or a bodice. Each head is decorated with a bejewelled crown. Each Śakti has the colour and the Vāhana of the Dhyāni Buddha to whom she is attached.

A good number of sculptural representations testifying to the popularity of the Buddhist goddess Tārā are found in the caves of Western Deccan, such as Ellora, Aurangabad, Kanheri, Nasik and other places and also at Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh, but very few of them can be chronologically assigned to a period earlier than the sixth century A.D. In the subsequent history of Buddhism, this goddess assumed numerous forms, and some of the varieties occur in sculptures, in stone and bronze, conforming to the dhyānas, at Nalanda, Bodhgaya, Kurkihar, various localities of Bengal and Orissa, Salihundam, Amaravati and Nagapattinam. Images of Khadirvāni Tārā, also known as Śyāmatārā, have been recovered from different sites in India. A beautiful statuette in the Baroda Museum shows the goddess in the lalita attitude. The Indian Museum of Calcutta has a few interesting standing figures of this goddess. The one from Mahoba is in a seated cross-legged posture. In the extant medieval representations of this variety of Tārā, sometimes curious miniature figures of eight goddesses or eight illustrative scenes are found carved on the prabhāvali or either side of the principal deity. One such image in the collection of the Dacca Museum shows this feature. On an image of Tārā, originally, hailing from Ratnagiri in Cuttack district of Orissa, we find other features which collectively stand for the 'eight great fears' from which she saves her devotees. In the Patna Museum, there are a few bronze and stone images of this goddess. The entire bronze collection of the Kurkihar hoard belongs to the Patna Museum. The Nalanda bronzes are mainly in the Indian Museum of Calcutta, and partly in the Patna and the site museum of Nalanda. In many cases, these metal images are inscribed. In one of the Kurkihar bronze images, she is shown standing in the dvibhanga or slight bend position. In another, she stands in samapadasthanka with the female attendants carrying camara, breast decorated with creeper designs incised. A third variety shows her eight-armed, wearing a high jatāmukuta, and seated in a slight bhanga pose. The fourth one is Śyāmatārā, a seated figure with lotus stalk in the left hand. This type is more frequent. From Kurkihar figurines, at least one of Sitatārā can be identified. Metal images from Nalanda include a figure of Dhanada-tārā, seated cross-legged, four-armed, the right upper of which holds a rosary, lower in the varada pose, while the upper left holds a lotus and the lower a cuplike object. It belongs to 10th century A.D. Of the stone images of the Patna Museum, a few of the Pala period are fragmentary. A complete figure of Khadiravāni Tārā, hailing from Hilsa, near Patna, shows the goddess in lalitāsana. The right hand with varada-mudrā rests on the right knee and the left hand holds a lotus. She is accompanied by Ekajatā and Aśokakāntā Mārici. Two images of the same goddess from Orissa have been presented in one of which she is seated with her right leg pendant on a great lotus while in another she is accompanied by the aforesaid deities and seated in lalitāsana. She has her hair dressed in a low chignon, is clad with uttariya and loin cloth and wears full and delicate jewellery. All these Tārā images can be collectively dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries.

An Indian Museum image of Mahāsri Tārā, she is shown as one-faced and two-armed, exhibiting the vyākhyāna or dharmacakra mudrā. To her left is Ekajatā sitting in the ardhaparyanka attitude. To her right sits Aśokakāntā Mārici who wears a jewelled crown, and carries the vajra and aśoka flower. The statue also depicts Jānguli towards the extreme left of the deity and a small figure of Mahāmāyuri to the extreme right. This Indian Museum image seems to be the only image representing Mahāśri Tārā where the sculpture is in complete accordance with the description found in the iconological texts. Images of Vajratārā are found almost everywhere in India. She is also popular in Nepal. In the Chinese collection of statues of Peiping, an image of Vajratārā is found under the title Aṣṭabhujā Vajratārā. This goddess should be, according to the iconological description, eight-armed and four-faced and in the midst of the circle of Eight Mothers. The Indian Museum bronze of Vajratārā from Patharghata is in the form of a lotus, and represents the complete maṇḍala or circle with all the attendant deities. The petals are eight in number, each bearing the image of an attendant deity. An Orissan image of this goddess recovered from Mayurbhanj, is four-faced and eight-armed, the four right hands containing vajra, noose, arrow and conch and the four left lotus, bow, goad and raised tarjani. A similar image of the goddess has been found at Sarasvatisthāna close to the Svayambhu temple in Nepal. A beautiful Tārā image belonging to 11th century, recovered from Jajpur, now in the Orissa State Museum, presents the goddess as seated in rājalilāsana showing vyākhyāna mudrā in right hand and a lotus stalk in the left. The Banpur hoard contains eleven bronze images of Tārā in lalitāsana, carrying lotus in left hand and exhibiting varada-mudrā in the right. The ornamentations show anklets on the feet, bracelets in the hand, necklace in neck and tapering mukutas on the crest. Stylistically these images may be compared to the Tārā images of Ratnagiri, Jairampur, Jajpur and other places of Orissa. From the ruins of the Somapura monastery, i.e., Paharpur in North Bengal, more than fifty terracotta plaques have been discovered which contain eight-armed images of Tārā.

The cult of Tārā in her various forms was strong in Eastern India. She is sometimes described in the sādhanās as being of terrific appearance, four-armed, standing in the pratyāliḍha pose on a corpse, and holding a sword, a chopper, a lotus and a skull in her hands and a miniature figure of Akṣobhya within the crown of chignon (ekajatā) on her head. The iconological trait of ekajatā of Tārā gave rise to the conception of the goddess Ekajatā, and the cult of this new goddess became popular in Bhota (Tibet). According to tradition, Ārya Nāgārjuna recovered the Ekajatā cult from Bhota. Images of Ekajatā are found in almost all the Buddhist countries of the North. She is known in Tibet as well as in China. Iconologically, she is of blue colour, with one face and three eyes, having a tiger-skin round her loin and brown hair piled upwards on her head. She may be two armed or four-armed or eight-armed.

In the year 1968 I got my Ph.D. degree from Delhi University, on the topic Śakti cult in the Purānas. Then I thought to work on the Buddhist counterpart of Śakti. The cult of the goddess Tārā, the supreme deity, was the topic. I started working on it. Then in 1970—Government of India selected me for Post-doctoral studies in London—and awarded commonwealth scholarship. For two years I worked in the 'School of Oriental and African studies,' London—under the supervision of Dr. Burton Page. There I met Dr. D. Snellgrove—the great scholar on Tibetan Buddhism. There I worked on the 'Cult of Tārā'. I consulted British Museum—London, Victoria and Albert Museum—London, India office library and the other Museums of Britain. During the vacations I visited Paris, Netherlands, West Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and I happened to see the Buddhist art pieces placed in the different museums of these countries. I also paid a visit to Prof. G. Tucchi—in Italy, the great scholar of Tibetology and Buddhism. Thus enriched by the personal contact of great scholars of Buddhism, Tibetan Lamaism and by visiting the various art Museums in Europe—I had a thorough understanding of this cult. Later, I came back to India, but due to heavy engagements and non-availability of a good publisher—the book could not be published earlier. Now the present book 'Tārā: The Supreme Goddess' is published and is placed in your hand.

The present book contains four chapters. The first chapter deals with the origin and development of the cult of the Goddess Tārā. Some of the scholars believe that Tārā was originated in Bhoṭa Desha or in China, while others believe that she was Indian in origin. This question has been dealt with in detail and most of the proofs go in favour of Her Indian origin. She would have migrated from India to Nepal, Tibet, China and other countries propagating Buddhism. In India her cult became most popular since 6th century onwords upto 12th-13th century A.D. Afteı that her cult is found only in Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, and other Himalayan regions. In her present cult there is mingling of aboriginal rituals, deities and forms of various countries, but originally she is an Indian goddess.

In the Second chapter 'Tārā and her various forms' are described. Generally it is believed that there are 21 forms of Tārā. The green Tārā and the white Tārā are two prominent forms of Tārā. She is the goddess of compassion and protects her devotees. It is also said in the older texts that of all the five Dhyāni Buddhas—each has his own Tārā—under different names. She is the goddess more popular in Vajrayāna School of Buddhism. In the 4th Century Texts like Guhya Samāj Tantra and Manjuśri Mūla Kalpa—The goddess Tārā is mentioned as the goddess—Śakti of Avalokiteśwara. But later on the number went on multiplying. Now the Tārās are enumerated colourwise, viz. Yellow Tārās, Red Tārās, Green Tārās, White Tārās and Blue Tārās respectively.

The important forms of Tārā are described in detail on the basis of Sādhanās given in Sādhana Mālā. The Mahāchina Tārā, Tārā of China is described. the Khadiravāni Tārā is of green colour. The Vasya Tārā is known by the name of Ārya Tārā. The Ṣadbhujā Sita Tārā is of white colour and bears Amoghasiddhi on her crown. Then Dhanada Tārā is one of the four armed varieties of Tārā. The Vajra Tārā seated on lotus, sits in the midst of eight mothers.

Then in Second section of this chapter there is a comparative study of the sculptures of Tārā found in various parts of India—with the Sādhanas of Tārā. L.A. Waddell has described 27 forms of Tārā from Tibetan sources. In the Sādhanamālā also there are various forms of Tārā described.

In the different Musems of the country and outside, many images of Tārā are preserved. We have given the description and discussed—in detail the following forms of Tārā. The Āryā Aṣta-Mahābhayā-Tārā—is one of the forms of Tārā conceived form early periods. Tārā in this form continued to be worshipped at least upto 12th Cent. A. D. in India. Later on she was worshipped outside India. Dhyāni Buddhas are generally absent in these images. These are of white colour. She was invoked for deliverance from the eight great perils, is attested by the inscribed stone slab from Dambal dated 1095-96 A D.

The Mahattari Tārā of green complexion is mentioned in the Indian Buddhist Iconography by B. Bhattacharya. She sits in Vajra-paryanka pose. Various images of this form of Tārā are found generally in the eastern part of India. The Simhanāda Tārā is a special form of Tārā—mentioned by A. K. Gordon. She is two-armed and is seated in Lalitāsana. Getty also published a Tibetan image of this Tārā. The Durgottārini Tārā has green complexion. She has four arms and sits on lotus. All the attributes in her four hands conform precisely to those prescribed in the Sādhanās. No image earlier than the 9th century A. D. is found under this name.

The Mahāśri Tārā is attended by the four goddesses. She bestows wealth on her devotees. The images of this form are rarely found. Then Ārya Khadiravāni—Tārā is green in complexion and is two-armed. The features of the goddess are common to several forms of Tārā. In Eastern India, many two armed images of this goddess have been found. The Vajra-Tārā means the Tārā of Vajra, the absolute of Vajrayāna. According to Vajrayāna Śūnyatā is designated as Vajra. The goddess wears on her crown all the five Dhyāni Buddhas. In attributes and postures she is similar to those of Mahattari Tārā. She is of highly tantric character. Many images of this deity are found in eastern India.

In the third section 'Tārā in the Hindu Tantras' is discussed. She is called great power. 'तारा नाम महाशक्ति' She is one of the Ten Mahāvidyās, very popular form of Tantric goddess. She is considered the most powerful deity. In the Hindu Tantras she is a very important and popular deity and great reverence is paid to her.

The third chapter is dealing with the popularity of Tārā goddess. Almost in all the provinces of India we find the popularity of this goddess. Though she is most popular deity in the eastern states viz. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In the Himalayan regions, where Buddhism was prevalent after 12th Century A.D.—we find the prevalence of worship of Tārā. The various monastries are located in Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, Leh and Himachal Pradesh. Besides these states we have references to this goddess in the caves of Deccan, viz. Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad. Even in Nagarjuni Konda ruins we have traces of Tārā-cult. Though Kashmir was the seat of Buddhism—we find no image of this goddess there. In Uttara Pradesh also we find many icons of goddess Tārā.

Outside India we find images in Tibet, Nepal and Bangladesh. In China and Japan we find the feminine incarnations of Avalokiteśvara. No feminine divinity of Buddhism is worshipped there. We find Pattini Devi in Sri Lanka. In Java and Cambodia we have a reference of Tārā temple as well references of Tārā icons. In the Museums of Britain, U S.A. France, Switzerland and Germany, many images of this goddess have been preserved.

The fourth chapter deals with the ritualism of Tārā cult. This chapter mainly discusses the Tibetan form of worship of Tārā. This form of worship is also popular in Nepal and Indian Tibet i.e. Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh and Leh. The canons are generally in various dialects of Tibetan language. In Tibet till recently this type of worship of Tārā was a living faith. In the end, text of Sādhanās related to Tārā is given in appendix, Index as well as Bibliography is added.

It is my foremost duty to thank all those scholars who helped me in this difficult venture. Prof. Burton Page and Prof. D. Snellgrove of the School of Oriental and African Studies—London, deserve special mention—as they helped, inspired, encouraged me and solved many difficulties. I am highly thankful to both of them. In India also, Dr. Lokesh Chandra ex-member Rajya Sabha and Dr. R.C. Pandeya of Delhi University, I owe deepest sense of gratitude they encouraged me from time to time. I am really grateful to Dr. R.K. Sharma who has blessed me by writing a foreword. Thanks to all those scholars, whose works I have consulted and refered. To many of my friends, librarians and students, I am really grateful. I am realy grateful to my wife Mrs. Santosh and other family members—who relieved me of my homely duties and encouraged me to work whole-heartedly on this book. They deserve special word of thanks. Last of all—I am really thankful to Mss. Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, Varanasi who did take many pains to publish this book, 'Tārā : The Supreme Goddess'. In the end I seek forgiveness of the scholars for the mistakes and pray to the goddess, Tārā—to save humanity from great perils of the modern world and bestow peace and happiness to each of us.

Dated 14/7/1992
Guru-Poornima day

Pushpendra Kumar
Deptt. of Sanskrit
Delhi University, Delhi-7

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF TĀRĀ

Tārā is the most popular goddess in the Buddhist pantheon. She holds the same place in Buddhism, as the goddess Durgā has in Brahmanism. The Buddhists consider Tārā to be the great Mother-goddess, the symbol of primordial female enargy and as the consort of Avalokiteśvara, the symbol of the primordial male principle. As mentioned in her sādhanās she enables her devotees to surmount all sorts of dangers and calamities. A mere prayer to the goddess is sure to remove the eight mahābhayas (great dangers), According to another sādhanā, those who meditate on the Bhagavati, all the eight divine powers fall at their feet, and other small powers come to them as a matter of course. As the great mother, she is also known as 'the mother of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas', The Tibetans, who also look upon her as the great mother, hold that she can be approached directly without the help of any intermediary, which is not the case with other divinities of the first rank. This may account for her popularity.

Tārā is as great as Durgā and figures as the counter-part or Śakti of Avalokiteśvara, just as Durgā is the Śakti of Śiva, The name Durgā also etymologically means the deity who removes grave dangers. A perusal of the Durgāstoras in the Mahābhārata (IV, 6 and IV. 23) would show that the Hindu devotees of Durgā conceived her as the great saviouress who, being prayed to, delivers her devotees from terrors like captivity, drowning, harrassment by robbers. etc. It may be noted that Tārini and Tārā as name of the Devi appear in the Mahābhārata and later Puranic and Tantric texts respectively. The earliest Puranic text which contains the name Tārā (Tārā nāma-Mahāśakti), is the Brahmānda Purāṇa.[1] The date of the composition of which is not later than 4th cent. A.D. In other words, Durgā and Tārā not only etymologically but also conceptually are identical.

The concept of the Hindu Mother-goddess, the quintessence of the eternal female principle, has been proved to be of considerable antiquity. The antiquity may be traced back at least to the seventh-sixth century B.C., the time of the Taittiriya Āranyaka, a text which describes a goddess named Ambikā (another name of Durgā) as the consort of Rudra.[1] As the Brahmanical feminine divinity. whatever may be her name, is proved to have emerged in the pre-christian centuries, there seems to be ample reason to believe that the Mother-goddess of the Buddhist pantheon owes her origin to her Brahmanical counterpart.

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[1] Brahmānda P. 31/12.

It is generally held that Āsanga grafted the Yoga system on to the Mahāyāna school sometime in the fourth-fifth century A.D. and as a result, the female principle came to be adored along with the male principle in the same manner in which the Hindus worshipped Śiva and Śakti or Devī, representing the male and female principles respectively. The Mahāyāna form of Buddhism underwent notable transformation under the influence of Tantricism. Tantricism provided a common cultural background to both Hinduism and Buddhism. Conceptual and iconic changes were thus simultaneously introduced in both Hindu and Buddhist pantheons.

Archaeologically, no image of the Buddhist Tārā has as yet been found that can be definitely assigned to a period earlier than the sixth century A.D. Some of the sculptural representations of Tārā in the Ellora caves (numbering 26) are assignable to the sixth century A.D. Tārā in Cave II appears also in the company of her consort Avalokiteśvara. One representation of Tārā in the Kanheri cave has been assigned to the fifth century A.D.; but the dating is not beyond doubt. In any case, there are reasons to believe that the cult of Tārā was established by the sixth century A.D. and some images of the goddess found at Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh have been ascribed to the seventh century A.D.

It may be noted here that a good number of sculptural representations of Tārā have been found in the Buddhist caves of the Western Deccan such as Ellora. Aurangabad, Kanheri, Nasik and others. All these images are, however, of placid and benign form.

To come back to the Brahmanical counterpart of the Buddhist Tārā. The concept of the Brahmanical Devi, Durgā or Durga-Tārā, as we may call her, being earlier than the concept of the Buddhist deity, it appears to our mind that, for the concept of their Mother-goddess, the Buddhists were indebted to their Hindu brethren, The recognition of the female principle in the Buddhist philosophy and its consequent iconic representation would be a point in that direction. A Buddhist goddess styled Parnaśābari, a comparatively late form of Tārā, is clearly reminiscent of the description of the Hindu Devi as 'a deity worshipped by the Śabaras, Barbaras and Pulindas' in the Harivamsa. Tārā thus appears to be a Buddhist version of the Hindu Devi, Durgā or Durgā-Tārā.

The above view is opposed to that of Hirananda Sastri and B. Bhattacharya, which seeks to trace the origin of Tārā in a Buddhist source. Laying undue emphasis on late Tantric works like the Rudrayāmala or Brahmayāmala and the comparatively late iconic representations of the goddess like Mahācinatārā, they have attempted to show that 'the cult of Tārā must have been Buddhist in origin or in other words, the Brahmanical mythology, took it from the Buddhist pantheon'.[1] By Brahmanical mythology, they referred to the tradition regarding the origin of the ten Mahāvidyās, among whom figures a Vidyā or goddess named Tārā. It is to be noted here that the mythology concerning the origin of the ten Mahāvidyās first comes to our notice in Mahābhāgavata Purāna and by no means it is datable to a period earlier than the twelfth-thirteenth century A.D. The sādhanā of the Buddist mahācinatārā, a fierce form of Tārā, belongs to the twelfth century A.D. and the Buddhist deity was Brahmanised only in the seventeenth century. Thus, on the basis of late evidence, Sastri and Bhattacharya seem to have made a hasty approach to the question of the origin of the cult of Tārā and, further, did lose sight of the fact that the essential concept underlying the Buddhist Tārā is almost exactly similar to that of the Brahmanical Durgā, the hoary antiquity of which is now an established fact.

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[1] Taittiriya Āranyaka, 10/18.

Connected with the question of the origin of the Buddhist Tārā is the question of her original place of worship. Sastri adduced three evidences to prove her foreign origin. These are, firstly, a sādhanā concerning Ekajatā, a late form of Tārā, refers to the fact that the deity concerned was revived in Bhota or in the country of Tibet by Nāgārjuna. The implication of this sādhanā thus being that her worship once existed in Bhota or Tibet and was in abeyance till it was resuscitated by Nāgārjuna. Secondly, the well-known Buddha-Vasistha legend in the Brahmayāmala T. indicates that the goddess styled Mahācinatārā came from outside (according to Bhattacharya from China, according to Sastri from the Tibetan borderland); and third, a passage occurring in the text called Svatantra tantra states that Tārā-Nila-Sarasvati was born in a great lake named Colana on the western slope of the Meru, and the lake has been located by Sastri in the Ladakh region. Hence Sastri concludes that 'Tārā worship originated somewhere towards Ladakh' and she came to India via Nepal.

Again, Sastri has based his conclusion on late evidences. First, Ekajatā and Mahācinatārā are two late forms of Tārā and the latter goddess seems to have been an elaboration of Tārā of China or the Indo-Tibetan borderland. Second, the legend regarding the origin of Tārā as found in the Svatantra tantra is a late one and merely it is one of the several legends regarding the origin of the deity.

A number of early representations of Tārā, either alone or in the company of her consort or accompanied by other Buddhist deities, have been found in the Buddhist caves of the Western Deccan. Being of placid appearance, presumably representing the saumya aspect like that of the Hindu Devi, they may be believed to have belonged to that phase of Buddhism which was uncontaminated by Tantricism, Exhibiting the varada (in some cases adhaya) mudrā in one hand and lotus in the other, these images are marked with simplicity and dignity.

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1. MASI, XX/12.

Among the Sirpur finds also images of Tārā, aesthetically similar to those of the Deccan caves, have been met with. There is nothing to show that artists responsible for all these iconic representations themselves came from the Indo-Tibetan borderlands. Further if the cases of Ekajatā and Mahācinatārā are to be put forward for proving that the cult of Tārā originated outside, why is the case of Parnaśābari to be left out, especially when her characteristic feature is found in the Hindu Devi in the Harivamsa. Thus it appears to our mind that the Buddhist Tārā originated in India and for the concept of the deity the Buddhists were, to some extent, indebted to the Hindus.

At the same time it would be wrong to suppose that the Hindus were not in any way influenced by the Buddhists in the sphere of their goddesses. As noted already, the name Tārā was applied to the Brahmanical Devi. The cases of the Buddhist Mahācinatārā and the Hindu-Tantric deity specifically designated as Tārā may be cited here. The dhyānas of these two deities are practically identical, and as the dhyāna of the Hindu Tārā is later than that of Mahācinatārā, it stands to reason that the deity we find in the Hindu Tantrasāra is nothing but a Hindu version of the Buddhist goddess. Tantricism here again is found to have provided a common cultural background to the Buddhist and Hindu pantheons. Jānguli, another form of the Buddhist Tārā, may also be belived to have given rise to the Hindu female deity Manasā. In other words, though at the earlier stage the Buddhists derived inspiration for the concept of their Mother-goddess and in the later days the Hindus might have also borrowed some of the goddesses from the Buddhist pantheon.

In connection with Tārā, we have referred to some of her forms like Ekajatā, Mahācinatārā, Jānguli and others. On the basis of the study of the Sādhanamālā[1], an anthology of sādhanās pertaining to different Buddhist deities, and another important work named Nispannayogāvali, B. Bhattacharya has made a list of 24 forms of Tārā. S.K. Saraswati has informed us that the published and unpublished texts may be found to enumerate nearly 100 varieties of Tārā. That there were at least 108 names of Tārā current among the Buddhists would be evident from the stotra styled Āryatārābhattarikānāmaastottarasatakastotra. Evidently enough, all these names emphasize in one way or other several attributes of the goddess. The Hindu goddess, Durgā or for that matter Devi, is also known by a host of names emphasizing attributes connected with her benevolent and fierce aspects like Annapurnā, Jagaddhātri, Kāli, Tārā, Ugratārā, etc. Iconically speaking, a distinction can be made between the different forms and names of the Buddhist Tārā and these iconic forms are nothing but the proliferations of the deity in question—the primordial Mother-goddess—which intend to represent her in different specific activities. Thus Parnaśābari protects her devotees from the epidemics and Jānguli extracts the poison from her snake-bitten worshipper. The goddess with the distinctive epithet Aṣṭamahābhayā[2] evidently delivers her devotees from 'eight

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1. Sādhanamālā, ed. B Bhattacharya, Vol. I, p. 207.
2. Sm. Debala Mitra has drawn our attention to a good example, among others, hailing from Ratnagiri, Cuttack District, now in the Patna Museum. She has published a photograph of this image with her article Aṣṭamahābhayā Tārā in the Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 1957, pp. 19-22. Pl.I(A).

great terrors' like shipwreck, conflagration, enraged elephant, brigand, pouncing lion, serpent, captivity and demon. Many images of Tārā of the mediaval period have on their prabhāvali, representations of votaries threatened with these mahābhayas and eight miniature replicas of the goddess in the varadamudrā as well. According to the sādhanā, the devotee should meditate on eight goddesses rescuing the afflicted devotees along with the principal deity[1].

The word Tārā, is therefore, a common epithet applied to both the Buddhist and Hindu Devis. Because these deities are supposed to save their devotees from manifold dangers and calamities, and 'enable them to cross the ocean of troubles', are called as Tārā and Durgā.

Between the eighth and twelfth centuries, the Buddhist goddess earned tremendous popularity among the Buddhists. Her worship was not confined only to India and Nepal, but spread to other extra-Indian territories as well. The Kesari plates of Rastrakuta Govinda III while recording the latter's act of snatching away the royal banner of the Pala monarch. Dharmapala suggests that his banner bore the effigy of Tārā. In other words. Dharmapala considering Tārā to be a source of success, depicted her effigy on his banner. In Ramapala's time we hear of Tārā being worshipped in the Jagaddala vihāra along with Lokeśa, presumably her consort Avalokiteśvara. A Javanese epigraph written in a North Indian script records the construction of a temple of Tārā (Tārā-bhavana) by the guru of the Śailendra family in Śaka 700 i.e. A.D. 778. The Indonesian countries have also yielded from time to time images of Tārā.[2] Hiuentsang speaks of the worship of an image of Tārā 'of great height and endowed with deep penetration' by kings, ministers and powerful men in his country on the first day of each year. In Tibet, the cult of Tārā seems to have been in vogue in the seventh century and a tradition goes that the Napalese and Chinese queens of Srong-tsan-sgam-po were regarded as incarnations of Tārā. The Tibetans, it is said, conceived of 21 forms of Tārā. The cult of Tārā spread also to Mongolia and Japan[3]. The Tibetans call the great goddess Sgrol-ma (Dol-ma) meaning 'saviousess' or 'deliveress' and the Mongolians describe her as Dara-eke, i.e. 'the Tārā mother. A plaque of about the ninth century A.D. containing a prayer to Tārā has been found in Ceylon, but in all likelihood it seems to have been brought from outside, for Ceylon and Burma are known to have been members of the Southern Buddhist school. The cult of Tārā thus found its way into the countries of Northern Buddhism.

A large number of sculptural and painted representations of Tārā have been discovered in India and outside. Iconographically they are of numerous varieties. The different forms and

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1. Aṣṭadevyantarāle ca bhāvayet Tārā-rupinim. Sādhanamālā, loc.cit.
2. Foucher, Beginnings, p. 267.
3. In Japan there is, however, only one form of the goddess. She holds the lotus and may display the varada or vitarka mudrā, or have the hands folded.

names of Tārā have already been mentioned. For correct identification of these images we take help of the Sādhanamālā.

One of the important features of Buddhist iconography is the grouping of deities according to the five Dhyani Buddhas, viz., Vairocana, Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Aksobhya, from whom they are said to have emanated. Each of these Dhyāni Buddhas has his own mudrā and colour. Images of emanating deities are generally found to have borne effigies of their respective parental Dhyāni Buddhas on their tiaras. They are also supposed to have the colours of their respective sires. Turning to the different varieties of Tārā, it is found that they have been assigned to four Dhyāni Buddhas—Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Aksobhya. But, in actual representations, we find that the miniature effigy of the parental Dhyāni Buddha is sometimes absent. As to the colour, it may be pointed out that colour is naturally available only in painted representations. So we are to look into other meaning of identification such as the attending deities, cognizances, sitting postures etc.

Tārā in her early and simple form is endowed with two hands and is generally found seated. While seated, she is normally in the vajrapayankāsana (sometimes in the lalitāsana). Her right hand exhibits varada Mudrā (rarely, abhaya; of the Ellora specimen) the left hand holding the stem of the lotus, either fulblown or close one. Her garments and ornaments look like those of a Bodhisattva and her hair is abundant and wavy. Images of Tārā of Mediaeval period are usually found standing.

In the course of time with the multipication of the forms of the Goddess, the number of her hands increased and variations appeared in respect of cognizances, sitting postures, etc. She was also attended by accessory figures, the number of which extended upto ten. Mediaeval sculptural representations of Tārā present normal features like the miniature effigies of respective parental Dhyāni Buddhas, which help us to identify such representations. The identification of accessory figures with the help of the sāddanās or the cognizances and sitting postures is also often resorted to.

The name 'Tārā' has essentially two connotations. It means 'star' and as star, particularly Dhruva-Tārā (Pole star), acted as great guide to ancient mariners, navigators and travellers through forests. It was but natural to deify the star (tārā) as a goddess by the ancient world. We have however, no firm ground to think that the Buddhist goddess Tārā was regarded exclusively as a goddess of navigation, though her help is, no doubt, sought for the safe passage accross the water which is one of the Eight Great Perils from which her votaries are expected to be saved. The other meaning is 'saviouress', derived from the causative from of the root tri, tara means carrying across, helping over a difficulty, rescuing and saviour. Tārā or Tārini is thus, a goddess who enables one to overcome difficulties, to swim across the waters of tribulations to a safe land and even to cross the ocean of existence. To the Hindus and also Buddhists, the existence in the world along with the chain of rebirths is considered like an infinite ocean. The Indian religion and philosophy are, therefore, directed to find out ways for attaining the safe mooring the ocean of existence (bhavasāgara).

In the early stages of her evolution and rise the Buddhist goddess Tārā is conceived essentially as a saviouress liberating people from various perils—(Bhayas), a role which she did not give up even when she became the supreme goddess. This becomes clear not only from early sculptural representations, but by the textual and epigraphic evidences also. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the idea ef deliveress is conveyed also by the Tibetan translation of the name which is 'Unloosener of difficulties'.[1]

Thus, in the following verses of the Ārya-Tārā-bhattārika-nāmāshtottaraśataka-stotra[2] it is said that Tārā is so called as she delivers people from the ocean of various dangers.

स्मरणादेव नामानि सत्त्वान् रक्षाम्यहं सदा ।
तारयिष्याम्यहं नाथ नानाभयमहार्णवात् ॥
तेन तारेति मां लोके गायन्ति मुनिपुंगवाः ॥

One of the earliest available texts composed in her praise is the Ārya-Tārā sragdharāstotra by Sarvajnamitra (eighth century A.D.) who was in the king's prison and threatened with death by burning, paid a gushing homage in an inspired tone to Tārā as a saviouress from various troubles including Eight Great Perils which are described in many verses.

One of the early inscriptions referring to Tārā as a saviouress was found at Kalasan near Prambanan in Java. The object of this inscription, dated Saka 700 (A.D. 778), is to record the construction of a temple (Chandi Kalasan) of Tārā by a Sailendra king at the instance of his gurus. The inscription begins with the following invocation to Tārā who delivers people from the world of infinite sorrows.

नमो भगवत्यै आर्यतारायै ।
या तारयत्यमितदुःखभवात् तिर्यंग् न ॥

Again, the Dambal (District Dharwar, Karnataka) inscription of the Western Chalukya king Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI, dated A.D. 1095-96, preambles with.[3]

भगवति तारे नमस्तुभ्यम् ।

'Reverence to Buddha: Reverence to thee, O Bhagavati Tārā, who allays the fear of lions, elephants, fire, hooded snakes, thieves, fetters, waters of oceans and demons, and who bears a splendour like that of the rays of the moon'.[4]

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1. L.A. Wadell—J.R.A.S. 1894, p. 64.
2. Ibid.
3. J.F. Fleet—Sanskrit and old Canarese Ins., Indian Antiquary-X, 1881, p. 185-90.
4. N.G. Majumdar, Nalanda Ins. of Vipula Srimitra, Epigraphica Indica-XXI, 1931-32, pp. 97-101.

'May that Tārā always bless you, who allays the misery of the affliction of existence; who sprang from the churning of the ocean of knowledge; who is called Prajnā; who is the giver of the power (vibhuti) of Buddha; who is the supreme form of perfect wisdom in the three worlds; and who dwells in the heart of Tathāgata, just as the full digit of the moon dwells in the sky:'

चान्द्री कला सा तारा भवतापदुःखसमानि प्रशास्तु वः सर्वदा ॥

The last verse of this record, inscribed round the top of the stone slab which contains near the top, a representation of the two-armed seated figure of Tārā with an utpala in her left hand, is again a eulogy of Tārā in the same tone. The translation of this verse is as follows:

'May Tārā,—who is anxiously busied with her exercise of tenderness entailed by preserving souls who are distressed by the notorious fear of water, kings, volumes of fire and wind; who takes away the dread of bold thieves, oceans and elephents and lions and snakes, etc., and who quickly confers the rewards that are desired,—always preserve Samgama.'

The inscription records certain grants by sixteen settis (sreshthis, bankers and merchants) to the vihāras of Buddha and Tārā, constructed in the city of Dharmapura, also called Dharmmavolal (modern Dambal). The temple of Tārā was built by the setti Samgavaryya of Lokkigundi (modern Lakkundi, District Dharwar).

The idea of Tārā rescuing people from various calamities continued even in the twelfth Century A.D. Thus, in the first verse of the Nalanda inscription of Vipula Srimitra, assigned to the first half of the twelfth century A.D., Tārā is called jagat-tārini (Deliveres of the world). Again, the following verse (Verse 8) of this record refers to Tārā as deliveress from Eight Great Perils.

अष्टौ यश्च महाभयानि जगतां निर्मूलमुन्मीलितुं-ताराया भवनं व्यधत्त सुकृति ।

'With a view to dispelling entirely the Eight Great Fears of the people, that meritorious person built a temple of Tārini (at Somapura, modern Paharpur, Bangladesh', adorned with a court and a tank.'

Again, in the following verse of the Sravasti stone-inscription of Vidyadhara, dated A.D. 1119 (in the reign of the Gahadavala king Madanapala of Kanauj), Tārā is invoked for crossing the ocean of worldly existence.[1]

संसाराम्भोधिताराया तारामुत्तरलोचनाम् ।
वन्दे गीर्वाणवाणीणां भारतीमधिदेवताम् ॥

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1. F. Kielhorn, A Buddist stone Ins. from Sravasti, Indian Antiquary-XVII, 1888, pp. 61-64,

'To Cross the ocean of worldly existence, I adore Tārā, whose eyes have protruding pupils,—Bhārati presiding over utterances of the gods.'

Even as late as the second quarter of the thirteenth century A.D, when most of the Buddhist centres of Northern India had closed down, Tārā was considered as a potential saviouress. Thus, the Tibetan monk-pilgrim Dharmaswamin, who visited Vaisali, Vajrāsana (Bodh-Gaya), Rajagriha and Nalanda in A.D. 1234-36, refers to a stone image of Ārya-Tārā at Vaisali which was 'known to be endowed with great blessing, and the mere beholding of the goddess' face relieved devotees from distress[1]. According to the evidence of Dharmaswamin, Tārā was highly venerated at Vajrāsana (Bodh-Gaya), even though it was at that time a stronghold of Hinayanist Śrāvakas. With reference to one image of Tārā established in a temple at that place. Dharmaswamin narrates the following tradition. A Śravaka, about to be drowned in a river, remembered the Mahāyanist goddess Tārā and cried out in distress 'Āryā'. In response Tārā appeared[2] in the Middle of the river and indicated to him the road by her right hand and the water subsided down to the waist of the man who was thus saved. The goddess afterwards transformed herself in a stone image which came to be known as 'Tārā of the River.' Another stone image of this place was called Hā-hā Tārā who was believed to have driven a demon tormenting her devotees. Tārānātha in his account of the period of Ācharya Dingnāga and others the story of the upāsaka Śāntivarman who, failing to cross a great river on his way to Potalaka, prayed to Tārā and an old woman appeared with a boat and took him across.[3]

There is no direct evidence to suggest the appearance of the Buddhist goddess Tārā before the fifth century A.D. The Saddharma pundarika,[4] does not mention the name of Tārā. Nor does she finds a mention in the Karanḍavyuha (fourth-century A.D.) where Avalokiteśvara has an honoured place. She is mentioned as an emanation of Avalokiteśvara in the Mahāvairochana-sūtra, which was translated into Chinese by Subhākarasimha, who went to China in A.D. 724 and died in A.D. 735.[5]

The Ārya-Manjurimulakalpa mentions Tārā several times. The most elaborate description of the goddess occurs in the fourth chapter (prathama-pata-vidhāna-vistāra) of this work in connexion with the prescriptions for patas as quoted below.

तत्रापाश्रितां देवीं आर्यविलोकितेश्वरकरुणां आर्यंतारां सर्वालंकारविभूषितां रत्नपट्टांशुकोत्तरीयां तारादेवीं मुखावलोकनमभिलेखया ।[6]

The above description shows that Tārā is closely associated with Avalokiteśvara. In fact,

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1. G. Roerich, A.S. Alteker, Biography of Dharmaswami, Patna, 1959, p. 61.
2. Ibid, p. 75.
3. Tārānātha's History of Buddhism in India, ed. A. Chattopadhyaya, Simla, 1970, p. 192.
4. The oldest Chinese translation of which goes back to the third fourth century A.D.
5. G. Tucchi, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Rome 1949, p. 338.
6. Manju Shri Mūla Kalpa, Part II, p. 45.

she is noted as the personification of the karunā of Avalokiteśvara (devim-Āryāvalokitesvara-karuṇām Ārya-Tārām) and it is enjoined that she, seated in paryankāsana, should have a side glance towards Avalokiteśvara. In this particular pata-vidhāna she is the only goddess represented amidst the figures of Śākyamuni, a host of Bodhisattvas, Pratyeka-Buddhas, Vairochana, Yamantaka, Mahāśrāvakas and others. It also furnishes her characteristic features. Thus, holding a blue utpala, and wearing all ornaments, she displays vara-mudrā. Her complexion is noted here as golden and having thin waist, she is neither too young nor too old.

Tārā with similar characteristics, is enjoined to be seated near the feet of Avalokiteśvara on the paṭa-vidhāna.[1] In this prescription Avolokiteśvara is to be depicted on the left side of Śākyamuni.

Tārā also finds a place in the mandala of Śākyamuni.[2]

स्त्रीरूपधारिणी देवी करुणा दशबलात्मजा ।
श्रेयसे सर्वभूतानां लिखेत वरदायिकाम् ॥

In this text Tārā is represented as always compassionate and ever-helpful to people for the alleviation of their distress. Thus, in Chapter Four she is eulogized in the following verses.[3]

सर्वविघ्नघातकी देवी उत्तमा भयनाशिनी ।
साधकस्य तु रक्षार्थं लिखेत वरदाँ शुभाम् ॥

Thus, she is represented as the remover of all obstacles (sarvavighnaghātaki) destroyer of dreads (bhayanāśini), bestower of boons (varadā) and the female personification of karuṇā. She is further extolled as the daughter of Daśabala (Daśabalātmajā) and mother of Kumāra Manjughosha.

कुमारस्येह माता देवी मञ्जुघोषस्य महाद्युतेः ।
सर्वविघ्नविनाशार्थं साधकस्य समन्ततः ॥

Her compassionate nature is again emphasized in Chapter LIII in the following verses.[5]

सा वै तारिणी प्रोक्ता विद्याराज्ञी महर्द्धिका ।
स्त्रीरूपधारिणी भूत्वा विचेरुः सर्वतो जगत् ॥
सत्त्वानाँ हितकामार्थं करुणार्द्रेण चेतसा ॥

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1. Manju Shri Mūla Kalpa, Vol. II, p. 28.
2. Ibid, p. 45.
3. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 45 (44-46).
4. Ibid, p. 45.
5. Ibid, p. 507-508, verses—820-833.

The above verses, apart from stressing on the benevolence of Tārā, inform us that her own kshetra is purvadeśa, i.e. Eastern India

स क्षेत्रस्तत्र देव्या तु पूर्वदेशः प्रकीर्त्तितः

also 'पूर्व्यां दिशमाश्रितः'

though by multiplying herself into many forms, she wanders in various parts of the world. Thus by the time this portion was composed, worship of Tārā appears to have been fairly widespread. Among the seats of Tārā particular mention is made of Harikela, Karmaranga, Kāmarupa and Kalsa, the last probably referring to Kalasan in Java. One of the verses quoted above equates Tārā with a Bodhisattva named Chandra. Does this Chandra refer to Chandragomin who played a significant role in diffusing the cult of Tārā ?

In verses 822 of this chapter Tārā is called Vidyārājni, while Verse 9 of the second chapter refers to a vidyā called Tārāvati which is effective in all ventures and which removes all obstacles.[1] The name of Tārā is included in the host of the names of Vidyārājnis in Chapter one as well.

विद्या तारावती नाम प्रशस्ता सर्वकर्मसु ।
मुद्रया शक्तियष्ट्या तु योजिता विघ्नघातिनी ।।

One of the important mudrās is also named after the mahākarunajā Tārā and the specification of this mudrā, is furnished. This mudrā, which is stated to be utpalākārasamnyastā,[2] is known as utpala-mudrā specially associated with sādhanās of different forms of Tārā.

The Ārya-manjusrimūlakalpa refers, apart from Tārā, some other goddesses including Pāṇḍaravāsinī (Paṇḍārā or Pāndara), Māmaki, Lochanā (Tathagata-Lochanā) and Sutārā. According to B. Bhattacharya, the original form of this text was much shorter, and was composed in about the second century A.D., while Winternitz places the composition of the text in the sixth or seventh century A.D.[3] Nalinaksha Dutt assigns the text to the fifth or sixth century A.D.[4] As the text refers to Gopal's accession to the throne, the available text in its present form is not earlier than the eighth century A.D.[5] The emergence of Tārā in the fifth-sixth century A.D. is, however, attested by the biography of Chandragomin and his composition in praise of Tārā. Tārā is mentioned in the pre-eighth century Guhyasamāja,[6]

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1. Manju Shri Mūla Kalpa, Vol. II, p. 21.
2. Ibid, p. 396.
3. The age of the Imperial Kannauj—Bombay 1955, p. 360.
4. Ibid, p. 262.
5. Ibid, p. 360.
6. Guhya Samāj Tantra—ed. B. Bhattacharya, pp. 2, 74, 137.

passages of which are quoted by Indrabhuti of eighth century A.D. The references here being mostly in the context of the Dhyāni-Buddhas, her affiliation is generally with the latter.

In the second quarter of the 7th century A.D. Hiuen Tsang mentioned Tārā[1] (To-lo) Bodhisattva (without any indication of the sex) in connexion with his description of the establishments of Ti-lo-shi-ka (Tiladhaka) and Nalanda, both in Bihar. In the former establishment there were three temples, the central one with the image of Buddha and the right-hand one with a bronze image of Tārā. In the latter place was a brick temple with a large image of Tārā which was a popular object of worship. It was in this century that Tārā came to occupy an exalted position.

Nalinaksha Dutt refers to the Mahāpratyangirādhārani, a fragment of which was found in Central Asia and written in characters of the seventh century A.D., in which Tārā is elevated to the position of the highest deity.[2] In this text, which was rendered into Chinese by the tantric teacher Amoghavajra (A.D. 704-74), Tārā is represented as a white-coloured goddess of noble men, with a thunderbolt in her hand, Vairochana on her crown and a garland of thunderbolts.

From this time onwards there were many stotras in honour of Tārā, one such being the already noted Sragdharā-stotra composed by the Kashmirian poet Sarvajnamitra (eighth century A.D.). In the eighth century her popularity crossed the sea to reach Java, as proved by the Kalasan inscription referred to earlier. Bengal appears to have taken a leading role in the dissemination of the cult of Tārā, particularly in areas beyond the seas. The Kalasan inscription specifically mentions that the construction of the temple of Tārā was at the initiative of the king's guru who hailed from Gauda. The Buddhist rulers of the Pala dynasty of Eastern India were particularly devoted to Tārā. She was held in such a high esteem that she was represented on the banner or standard of this dynasty, as is evident from the Nesarika grant (dated A.D. 805) of the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III.[3] As pointed out by D.C. Sircar, this grant, while referring to the snatching away the royal banners or standards of various kings defeated by him, notes the fact of Dharmapala's banner was bearing the famous figure of Bhagavati Tārā.

It is clear that Tārā is late comer into the pantheon of Mahāyāna Buddhism as the early Buddhists were not in favour of the female principle. The Buddhist monks themselves adopted, in course of time, many things totally incompatible with the original teachings of Buddha which, eventually, bifurcated the Buddhist Sangha into two camps Hinayānist (followers of orthodox doctrine) and Mahāyānist (liberal interpreters of the doctrine]. The growth of Mahāyāna led to the emergence first of Bodhisattvas and afterwards, under the influence of the Yogāchāra doctrine, of their spiritual śaktis of Prajnās in the form of personified goddesses. The elementary pantheon was elaborated into a host of gods and goddesses in

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1. Thomas Waters—On Yuan Chwang's in India II, pp. 106, 171.
2. The age of Imperial Kanauj, p. 262.
3. Epigraphica Indica XXXIV, 1961-62, p. 137.

the course of the further transformation of Mahāyāna into Vajrayāna.

The worship of gods and goddesses by the Buddhists is inconsistence with the rational and ethical teachings of Buddha. The emergence of deities, therefore, is due to some factors with which the Buddhists had to reckon. The most important factor is the ascendancy of the Brahmanical Hinduism which received a great fillip during the days of the Guptas. In this period when the opposition of the supporters of Brahmanism towards Buddhists was considerably acute and there was no monarch to take up their cause in the manner of Aśoka, the Buddhists counted greatly on the support of the masses, particularly the rich mercantile class, to ensure prosperity to their religion and institutions. From the close study of images and also liturgical literature it is apparent that the Mahāyānists were determined to win over the masses saturated with Brahmanical concepts by bringing the religion within their reach and conceding to them what they expected from the Brahmanical deities, even though such a concession would require a radical change in their religion. The common people would very little understand the philosophy or the spiritual elevation. Being fronted by the grim reality, they would want relief from their miseries, look up towards the gods for allaying their sufferings and invoke gods' blessings for the fulfilment of their desires. To make their religion attractive and also acceptable to the maximum number of people of various ethnic groups including aboriginal and tribal, whether living in towns, villages, forests or hills, the Mahāyānists and afterwards the Vajrayānists introduced the Buddhist counterparts of the Brahmanical and folk deities who would bestow on the votaries what the latter so long got or expected from the Brahmanical gods and goddesses and folk divinities. To counteract the overpowering, ever-spreading and all-pervading forces of Brahmanism, the Buddhists did not hesitate, even at the cost of their original precepts to take over the concepts and even iconography of many of the Brahmanical gods and goddesses and regional ideas and beliefs. They, however, tried, though not always successfully, to impart Buddhist complexion to whatever they borrowed. In fact, in their frenzied zeal to obtain supremacy by drawing people of all walks of life away from the Brahmanical fold, the Vajrayānists took pains to make their pantheon as comprehensive as possible by incorporating all possible iconographic concepts from different religions in order to cater to all tastes and religious temperaments. They even invented new forms (like Harihariharivāhanodbhava-Lokeśvara, Trailokyavijayā, Aparajitā, etc) blatantly downgrading the Brahmanical gods under the feet of the Buddhist deities. Though there may not be many cases of violent physical strife leading to bloodshed, no doubt there was an acute rivalery between Buddhism and Brahmanism which found its expression in the images themselves and the liturgical literature, The great ideal of Aśoka to desist from the flagrant extolment of one's own religion and disparagement of other's religion was entirely lost sight of in the later days. With this background let us now find out how much the Buddhists owed to Brahmanism for the concept of Tārā. At the outset let it be reiterated that there is no evidence (whether literary or archaeological) of the existence of Tārā before the Gupta period. The earliest image of Tārā can only be ascribed to the sixth century A.D.

1. B. Bhattacharya, Buddhist Iconography.
2. M. Ghosh; Development of Budhist Iconography, p. 15.

Let us first tap the Brahmanical literature itself in order to examine the validity of Shastri's contention that Tārā 'is practically unknown to the earlier Brahmanical books where if any distinct personality is mentioned under the name of Tārā it seems to be more Buddhist than Brahmanical.' Probing this source we find that there are undoubted references to the Brahmanical goddess Tārā or Tārini in the earlier Brahmanical literature.

The existence of Tārā as a distinct divinity is attested by the Lalitopākhyāna section of the Brahmānda-purāna which has been assigned to the end of the fourth century A.D. Here Tārā is represented as a mahāśakti (Tārā nāma mahāśakti, Verse 12, also called Tārāmbā, Verse 17) who controls the gate of the nectar-lake and is endowed with the power of calming down the flood waters, there are her numerous attendants with green complexion who are śaktis rowing the boats.

तासाम् नौकावाह्किानाम् शक्तिनाम् श्यामलात्विषाम् प्रधानभूता ताराम्बा जलौघशमनक्षमा

व्यामोहे त्रिपुरां तरन्ति विपदस्तारां च तोयप्लवे ।[3]

The concept of the Buddhist goddess Tārā as a saviouress and śakti is latent in the concept of Durgā, who was evolved long before the Buddhist goddess.

That the cult of Śakti was well-established during the Kushana period is proved by the find of a good number of images of Mahishāsuramardini and Sapta-Mātṛkās of the Kushana period. A somewhat earlier image (end of the first century B C. or beginning of the first century A.D) of Mahishāsuramardini was found at Nagar (Rajasthan).[4]

Now the name Tārā, is an appellation of Durgā who puts an end to durgati, i.e., distress (durgati-nāsini Durgā). Etymologically, both Durgā and Tārā convey the same idea. Significantly enough, one of the forms of the Buddhist goddess Tārā known as Durgottārini-Tārā[5] or Durgottara.[6] It is referred to (नमस्तारामे) the name of Rudra as Tāra, in the Vājasaneyi-Samhitā (XVI. 40). It is, therefore, quite natural that Durgā, consort of Rudra-Śiva, assumed the name of Tārā or Tārini in her role as a saviouress. In the stuti of Durgā by Arjuna occuring in the Bhishma-parvan of the Mahābhārata, the goddess is called Tārini and protects the worshippers.[7]

भद्रकाली नमस्तुभ्यं, महाकाली नमोस्तुते ।
चण्डि चण्डे नमस्तुभ्यं तारिणी वरवर्णिनी ।।

1. Brahmānda Purāna – Ch. 3/4/35/12-18.
2. Ibid, 3/4/35/17.
3. Laghustava of 10th cent.
4. R.C. Agrawal—Lalit Kala, I-II (1955-56), pp. 72-74.
5. B. Bhattacharya—The Indian Buddhist Iconography, p. 307.
6. The Indian Historical Quarterly IX, p. 287.
7. Mahābhārata—Bhisma Parvan (Poona 1947), p. 710.

The vision of Durgā as a protectress may be had in the following verses uttered in her praise by Yudhishthira in the Virāta-parvan of the Mahābhārata.[1]

दुर्गोत्तारयसे दुर्गे तत्त्वं दुर्गा स्मृता जनैः ।

In these verses Durgā is extolled as rescuing people from perils. She is the refuge of men attacked by robbers or distressed in wilderness, forests, waters and oceans.

जलप्रतरणे चैव कान्तारेष्वटवीषु च ।
ये स्मरन्ति महादेवीं न च सीदन्ति ते नराः ॥

Devi-māhātmya section of the Mārkandeya-purāna, (the end of the fourth century A.D.), brings out clearly the impact as the supreme Brahmanical goddess Durgā on the concept of the Buddhist goddess Tārā. This highly inspired literary creation presents a comprehensive picture of Devi, the supreme divine principle who manifests herself in different forms for the good of the three worlds.

Tārā appeared in the Buddhist pantheon first as a śakti of Avalokiteśvara in the role of a saviouress from perils, In the early sculptural representations we find Tārā delivering devotees from Eight Great Perils, namely, wild elephant, lion, serpent, demon, conflagration, shipwreck, brigand and prison. The already-noted Sragdharā-stotra also enumerates these very Eight Great Perils from which Tārā rescues her devotees. The supreme goddess Durgā, who is the shelter of all (sarvāśrayā) and who is the remover of distress (durgatināśinī), is represented in the Devi-māhātmya as liberating the people from all kinds of troubles including the Eight Great Perils and helping the devotees to cross even the ocean of existence.[3]

देवी त्रयी भगवती भवभावनाय वार्त्ता च सर्वजगतां परमार्त्तिहन्त्री ।
मेधासि देवी विदिताखिलशास्त्रसारा दुर्गासि दुर्गभवसागरनौरसंगा ॥

'Thou as Goddess art the triple Veda, the adorable, and for the existence and production, Of all the worlds, thou art active; thou art the supreme destroyer of their pains. Thou art Mental Vigour; O Goddess ! Thou hast comprehended the essence of all the Scriptures. Thou art Durgā; the boat to cross the difficult ocean of Existence; devoid of attachments. Thou art Śri, who has planted her dominion alone in the heart of Kaitabha's foe. The indeed art Gauri who has fixed her dwelling in the moon-crested god'.[4]

दारिद्रयदुःखभयहारिणी का त्वदन्या
सर्वोपकारकरणाय सदार्द्रचित्ता ।

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1. Mahābhārata, Virat Parvan, p. 30.
2. Ibid.
3. Devi Māhātmya IV/9-10.
4. Ibid IV/16.

'Thou, O Durgā, when called to mind, dost remove terror from every creature. Thou, when called to mind by those in health, dost bestow a mind extremely bright. What goddess but thou, O dispeller of poverty, pain and fear, has ever benevolent thought in order to work benefits to all'

सर्वागतदीनार्त्तं — परित्राणपरायणे,
सर्वस्यार्त्तिहरे देवि नारायणी नमोस्तुते ।।[1]

'O thou, who art intent on saving the dejected,
Who protects the distressed seeking refuge under thee,
O Goddess, who removes the suffering of all,
O Nārāyani, reverence be to thee!'

'Wherever dwell Rākshasas and virulently-poisonous Nāgas,
Wherever foes exist, wherever the powers of the Dasyus,
And where flaming fire appears amid the ocean,
There abiding thou dost safeguard the universe!'

'The recitation of the Māhātmya diminishes most effectively the power of all evil ways of life. Its mere chanting destroys the Asuras, Bhutas and Piśachas'.

दावानलो यत्र तथाब्धिमध्ये
तत्र स्थिता त्वं परिपासि विश्वम् ।।[2]

'Who is surrounded by forest-fire in a lonely forest or on its outskirts, or who is surrounded by robbers in a desolate spot, or who is captured by enemies,

Or who is pursued by a lion or a tiger or my wild elephants in a jungle, or who under the order of a wrathful king is sentenced to death or has been imprisoned,

Or who in the midst of the ocean is tossed about in his boat by a tempest, or who is placed in the most terrible battle under showers of weapons,

Or who is amidst all kinds of dreadful troubles or who is suffering from pain; such a person, remembering this charita of mine, is freed from his trouble.

Through my power lions, robbers and enemies flee to a distance from him who remembers this story of mine'.[3]

मम प्रभावात् सिंहाद्या दस्यवो वैरिणस्तथा ।
दूरादेव पलायन्ते स्मरतश्चरितं मम ।।[4]

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[1] Devi Māhātmya, XI/11.
[2] Ibid, XI/32.
[3] Ibid. XII/3-7.
[4] Ibid, XII/28.

The Buddhists also assigned to Tārā almost a similar role, as is evident from the following verses occurring in the Ārya-Tārā bhattārikā-nāmāshtottaraśatakastotra, a work much later than the Devi-māhātmya.[1]

From a close perusal of this late work and the Devi-māhātmya section of the Markandeya-purāna it is abundantly clear that the chief inspiration for the Buddhist goddess Tārā was derived from the Brahmanical concept of Durgā. Like the latter, Tārā, in her later development, was found to assume various names and forms for the manifestation of her various aspects. Thus, great similarities are noticed between Durgā and Tārā, not merely in respect of their concepts, but with regard to the names and corresponding to these concepts.

तारयिष्याम्यहं नाथ नानाभयमहार्णवात् ।

Thus, in the Ārya-Tārā bhattārikā-nāmāshtottaraśatakastotra, Tārā is called Shahasranetrā, Sarasvatī, Svāhā, Aparājitā, Mahāraudri, Bhagavati, Mahāmāyā, Mahāchandi, Mahāgauri, Khadgi, Chakrī, Chapayutayudha, Kālī, Kālarātri, Śānta, Brahmāni, Saumyā, Sandhyā, Dhruvā, Bhimā, Śaranyā, Śivā, Nityā, Mangalyā, Sarvārthasādhani, Bhadrā and Dhātri. Significantly enough, all these appellations are used with reference to Devi in various contexts of the Devi-māhātmya Section of the Mārkandeya purāna. Other names of Tārā mentioned in this stotra, like Bhaktavatsalā, Jambhāni, Jātavedā, Jayā, Kapālini, Mahābhāgā, Mohini, Pītavāsasā, Punyā, Śuddhā, Tārini, Varadā, Vedamātā, Vijayā and Viśuddhā, occur in the two Durgā-stutis of the Mahābhārata referred to above. Among these names, Jātavedā applied to Durgā and afterwards appropriated by the Buddhist goddess Tārā is particularly significant. Durgā herself received this Vedic appellation of Agni on account of her helping the devotees to cross the waters of tribulations. She is as if a boat across the river. Thus, the following hymn of the Ṛgveda with reference to Jātavedas[2] is recited for anga-nyāsa before reading the Devi-māhātmya-Mantra.

We find the Buddhist goddess Tārā first as the śakti of Avalokiteśvara (just as Durgā is the sakti of Siva], the Parama-kārunika Bodhisattva, who, with his compassionate look spread over all points of the space, is believed to be ever-watchful for the well-being of the people and who out of great compassion has prefered to forego Buddhahood, so that he may continue to allay the sufferings of mankind [The iconographical concept of this Bodhisattva was derived largely from that of Śiva]. This consept of the personified female energy of a particular Bodhisattva is definitely borrowed from the Brahmanical philosophy [i.e., the power of a god is represented by his spiritual consort, the active creative principle] and mythologies regarding the origin of Devi Mahishāsuramardini and also of Sapta-Mātṛkās.

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[1] कम्पयन्ती त्रयो लोकान् त्रास्यन्ती यक्षराक्षसान् ।
नीलोत्पलकरा देवी महाभैरवीति ब्रूवन् ॥ जगत्संरक्षणा चापि त्वहमुत्पादिता जिनैः ।
कान्तारे शस्त्रसम्पर्के नाना-भय समाकुले । स्मरणादेव नामानि सत्त्वान् रक्षयाम्यहं सदा ॥
Āryā-Tārā-Stotra Verses 14-16.

[2] Ṛgveda I/99/1.

As already noted, the earliest available image of Mahishāsuramardini is datable to the end of the first century A D, while the earliest images of Sapta-Mātṛkās are ascribable to the early Kushana period. In the Purānic account of the origin of Mahishāsuramardini as detailed in Chapter II of Devi-māhātmya section of Mārkandeyas purāna, we find that the great goddess came out of the combined Tejas emanating from the bodies of the devas including Śiva, Vishṇu and Brahmā [tatah samastadevānām tejorāsisamudbhavām tām, vilokya mudam prāpuramarā Mahishārditāh/Verse 18]. In Chapter VIII of the Devi-māhātmya, again, we are told that the śaktis [Brahmāni, Māheśvari, Kaumāri, Vaishṇavi, Vārāhi, Nārasimhi and Aindri] sprang forth from the bodies of Brahmā, Iśa (Maheśvara), Guha [Kārttikeya], Vishṇu, Yajna-Vārāha, Nrisimha and Indra in order to strengthen Chandikā in her combat with the mobilized army of Śumbha, the lord of the Asuras. These deva-śaktis, with the attributes, mounts and ornaments of their respective gods from whom they had emanated, approached Chandikā in a group headed by Iśāna [tatah parivṛtastābhiriśāno devaśaktibhih. VIII. 21] who directed Chandikā to kill the Asuras. In the representation of the group of Sapta-Mātṛkās in the early Gupta period, we find Iśāna occupying the first position preceding Brahmāni and others. In a somewhat later date Ganeśa is represented as following the group, Iśāna preceding as usual.

The sculptural representations in the western Indian caves of the fully-developed Mahāyāna poase throw significant light on the impact of Brahmanism on the evolution of Buddhist goddesses and the taking over the function of Avalokiteśvara in redeeming people from woes and sins by Tārā after her emergence as his śakti.

Cave 7 of Aurangabad is interesting as it shows that the Buddhists of this region, yet uncertain about the manner of introducing their goddesses, were in a stage of experiments falling largely on the Brahmanical source. In fact, they had left an unmistakale indication of their indebtedness to their Brahmanical brethren, in a large panel of sculpture- figures on the back wall of the chapel at the left-hand end of the verandah of Cave 7. The panel (III. 1) presents six goddesses with Avalokiteśvara (holding a rosary and a water-pot) at the left-hand end and Buddha at the right end, all standing side by side in a row on individnal lotuses. With conspicuous bodily flexions and oval hàloes, the goddesses hold each a bouquet of flower in their right hands, the left hands either extended (with a portion of the scarf in palm) or touching the left thigh. Most of the bouquets are defaced. The clearly visible bouquet in the right hand of the third goddess (from the dexter) is a bunch composed of a red lotus, two utpalas and a Kadamba flower with a leaf. The figures lack clear-cut attributes to be iconographically established with the definite divinities of the Buddhist pantheon, which is but natural in a formative stage when the Buddhists were tapping the field of other religions in order to evolve their own Needless to say, the source of the inspiration of this particular panel is undoubtedly the Brahmanical group of Sapta-Mātṛkās preceded by Iśāna and followed by Ganeṣa, the cult of whom was in wide popularity throughout India in this period and even earlier. At Aurangabad itself, there is a panel of Mātṛkās in the recently discovered cave, named after Ganesa, the central figure of the back wall. This cave, immediately on the dexter of Cave 6, is slightly earlier then the Cave 7. Covering the left wall of this cave, originally Brahmanical, are Vīrabhadra (Iśāna) and six Mātṛkās. Chāmundā the seventh Mātṛkā, is carved on the back wall near its junction with the left wall. Next to Chāmundā is Ganeśa, beyond whom is a four-armed image of Mahishāsuramardini. On the right wall are two seated figures of Buddha, evidently carved at a later date when the Buddhists appropriated this Brahmanical cave.

For tracing the emergence of Tārā as the śakti of Avalokiteśvara to relieve him of his active function of rescuing devotees from perils, we have to turn again to the remarkable series of caves at Ajanta, Aurangabad, Kanheri and Ellora which preserve on their walls the documents of the intense artistic activities, inspired by the religious life, continuously from the fifth century A.D. to the ninth century A.D.

None of the caves of Ajanta (of the fifth century A.D.) bears any sculptural representation of Tārā. In fact, there is only one sculpture representation of the goddess so far identified at this place and that too is of a later date. It is carved on the left wall of a recess excavated in the rock flanking the pathway leading from Cave 10 to Cave 11. The figure, standing in these tamepade, on a lotus is greatly abraded; the right hand might have been in the abhaya-mudrā, while the left hand holds the stalk of a red lotus. The image, though lacking the characteristic attribute, utpala, may represent Tārā at a stage when the artists of the western Indian caves were still labouring under the uncertainty about the correct rendering of her Iconographical features. In any case, the figure itself is not earlier than the end of the sixth century A.D. the inconspicuous recess which houses the figure being a late excavation of this period.

The right wall of this very recess contains a figure of Avalokiteśvara, delivering devotees from perils. In fact, at Ajanta, there is overwhelmingly large number of images of Avalokiteśvara as a protector of the distressed from the Eight Great Perils—fire, shipwreck, robbers, fetters, demon, serpent and elephent. None of these images is however, earlier than the end of the fifth century A.D. and also none of them is accompanied by a goddess.

There is a single relief of Avalokiteśvara helping the devotees to come out of the Eight Great Perils at Aurangabad. carved by the side of the central door leading to the main shrine of Cave 7, the relief is stylistically ascribable to the second half of the sixth century A.D. Here too, as at Ajanta, the Boddhisattva has no goddess by his side. Of course, Aurangabad nourishes a good number of images of female divinities in a stage of experiments, often accompanying the Bodhisattvas and sometimes almost independent, mostly of the early seventh century A.D. An unfinished cave of Badami and Caves 3 and 4 of Ellora also bear representations of this particular form of Avalokiteśvara unacompanied by any goddesses.

This theme is represented also on the walls of Caves 2, 41 and 90 of Kanheri. The representation in Cave 90, assigned to the end of the sixth century A.D., is the most elaborate one [III. 3]. Here Avalokiteśvara is depicted as a savior from ten dangers including the well-known Eight Great Perils. In the panel the Bodhisattva with the stalk of a lotus in his left hand is seen standing, flanked by two goddesses, possibly nascent forms of Tārā and

Bhṛkuti. While there is no attribute in the hand of the goddess on the dexter, the one on the sinister carries a lotus-bud and not utpala, the typical attribute of Tārā. Evidently, the śakti of Avalokiteśvara has been evolved though in a formative stage of iconography. However, Avalokiteśvara was still at that time in the panel. We find miniature epiphanies of Avalokiteśvara and not of Tārā flying to the aid of the distressed.

In Cave 9 of Ellora we find for the first time the function of Avalokiteśvara as a saviour from perils relegated to Tārā, his śakti, who appeared alone in her own right. This particular panel [III. 2]. carved on the facade of Cave 9, is ascribed to the middle of the seventh century A.D. Here Tārā with the stalk of a lotus in her left hand [right hand broken] stands on a lotus, the stem of which is held by nāgas. The panel is badly damaged. Still one can recognize the dreads of fire and shipwreck on the left and elephant, serpent and brigand on the right.

From this time onwards we find the images of Tārā as the saviouress of devotees from various perils. By virtue of her role as a geat protectress, Tārā soon attained a wide popularity. Her fame, carried mainly through the successful voyageurs, travelled beyond the seas within a short span of time as testified by the Chandi Kalasan Inscription of A.D. 778.

Tārā in the course of her development acquired many concepts, but she retained this aspect as a saviouress in her Ashṭamahābhayā-Tārā form. Several images of this form have been found in India, one [III. 9] of the earliest extant stone images in Eastern India being from Ratnagiri. It is ascribable to the eighth century A.D. In this connexion it may be noted that Tārā is invoked even in her normal form with an utpala in her left hand and right hand showing the vara-mudrā, for dispelling the fears of Eight Great Perils. This is proved by the representation of the goddess on the stone containing an inscription found at Dambal mentioned above.

About the Eight Great Perils, we find that these dangers are practically those encountered by travellers in the course of their journey through various countries, towns, forests, deserted places and waters. In ancient India, apart from mendicants and pilgrims, the community which had to undergo maximum journeys and vovages subscribed to the rich merchantile class [sreshthis, sārthavāhas, vanijas, etc.] involved in trade, whether land-borne or sea borne, the successful operation of which demanded extensive and frequent journeys. The traders with their heavy merchandise were vitally exposed to dangers which were, no doubt, great menaces to their very lives and commodities. It is, therefore no wonder that first Avalokiteśvara and afterwards his female counterpart, Tārā, by virtue of their redeeming attributes drew a large number of votaries from the class of merchants and traders who invoked their aid for the safety of lives and goods and for safe passage. This, evidently, the main inspiration behind the representation of so many figures of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā in the western Indian caves, which are mainly concentrated on the ancient caravan-routes, connecting inland marts with coastal ports. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the wealth of this rich mercantile class contributed not a little to the material prosperity of the rock-out establishment which found its expression in the overflowing exuberance of the carvings, sculptures and paintings of the western Indian caves. The already-mentioned Dambal inscription is one of the many instances showing the popularity of Tārā, particularly among the sreshthis. In fact, one of the names of Tārā is Sārtha-vāhakripādrishti, according to the Ārya-Tārā-bhattārikā-nāmāshtottaraśataka-stotra.

The concept of the Buddhist goddess Tārā is not merely borrowed from the most powerful Mātṛkā of the Brahmanical pantheon, but the very characteristic attribute in her hand is also incorporated from the Brahmanical goddess. It is well-known that the typical attribute of the Buddhist goddess Tārā was an utpala [water-lily] which continued to occur in her hand from the very beginning to the end. Even. when she assumed multiple arms, one of the palms normally bore this flower, her symbol par excellence.

The utpala is found in the left hand of the Matṛkās since very early times. Two of the Brahmanical images of the Kushana period from Mathura bear this flower. No. 53.67 [of the Lucknow Museum] depicts the goddess singly on a red sandstone slab. Seated with knees drawn up, she displays the abhaya-mudrā with her right palm. The palm of the left hand, carries the stalk of an utpala. The same features are noticeable in the first figure of the three goddesses represented in the second relief carved on an oblong red sandstone slab [Lucknow Museum no. 0 241]. It is not possible to identify the figures with individual Mātṛkās, as the characteristic attributes have not been depicted and the number of the Mātṛkās is only three in the panel, the fourth being a pot-bellied male. The right hand of all the three Mātṛkās is in the abhaya-mudrā. One of them carries a baby. It may not be unlikely that the figure holding the utpala stands for Maheśvari, the śakti of Maheśvara.

We find the flower in the hand of the consort of Maheśvara in the reliefs on the wall of Cave 1 at Badami. Cave 3 of this place was excavated at the instance of the Western Chalukya king Mangalesa in the Saka year 55 [A.D. 578]. Cave 1 is considered to be the oldest of the caves here and is earlier than Cave 3. On the eastern wall of the verandah of Cave 1 is a fine relief of Hari-Hara, a combined form of Vishṇu and Maheśvara. Standing by the flank of Śiva-half of the image is the figure of the consort of Maheśvara. With her right hand extended along the thigh, she carries in her left hand an utpala. Again, on the western wall of the same cave occurs a four armed relief of Ardhanārisvara (Gauriśvara), the combination of Umā (or Gauri) and Maheśvara. One of the left hands of this image [left half representing Umā) holds an utpala. Another relief of the śakti of Śiva on an upright (Lucknow Museum no. 55.201), ascribed to the sixth century A.D., from Bhitari shows her seated on a lion and bearing a trident, a sword, a shield and an utpala. The consort of Śiva is found to hold this attribute even in later periods, for which there is ample literary and archaeological evidence. III. 4 shows an image of the goddess, found at Dakshine-Muhammadpur near Comilla, District Comilla, Bangladesh (now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, old no. 9481 and new no. A 25209 and ascribable to the late eleventh or early twelth century A.D. Standing in the sama-pada pose, the three-eyed goddess displays the vara-mudrā with her right palm and holds the stalk of an utpala with her left palm. The image is so akin to the images of Tārā that one would have identified her with the Buddhist goddess if the figures of Śiva Brahmā, Vishṇu, Kārttikeya and Ganeśa had not been represented above the halo of the goddess.

The reason for this particular attribute of Tārā is not definitely known. The blooming time of utpalas, which open at the sunset and close at the sunrise is night and, accordingly, these flowers are associated in imagery with the moon, just as the lotus, which opens in the morning and closes by the night, is connected with the sun. Both these flowers with their prolonged life symbolize rejuvenation of life. The promise of a prolonged life together with the idea of Tārā delivering devotees from the dark elements may be the reason for the preference for this particular flower. Another conjecture may be made in this matter. Tārā made her debut as a companion of Avalokiteśvara, she being the personification of the karunā of the latter. Now the attribute of Avalokiteśvara who was conceived long before Tārā, is the red lotus, a symbol of daylight (and dharma). Consequently, Tārā was given the utpala, the symbol of night, as they togather set themselves up to the task of allaying human suffering and causing happiness to people both by day and night. The Vishṇudharmottara-purāna explains the symbolism of the utpala in two contexts. When it is in the hand of the Umāvaktra flank of mahādeva, it symbolizes vairāgya [freedom from worldly desires]. When it appears in the hand of Gauri, consort of Varuna, it signifies saubhāgya [good fortune, welfare]. The two kumudas [white water-lily] in the hands of soma [the moon] stand for harsha [joy] and prasāda [graciousness, welfare, favour]. The utpala in the hand of Tārā may also signify saubhāgya and prasada, as she is expected to look to the welfare and happiness of her devotees The extent of Tara's indebtedness to the śakti of Śiva is further evident from an image of Tārā [III. 22], where the lion, the mount of Pārvati, occurs below the left foot of Tārā.

As regard the place of the origin of Tārā, Shastri's theory is that Tārā originated somewhere towards Ladakh or Indian Tibet, penetrated Magadha through Nepal and then spread to the rest of India is untenable, as it runs counter to the literary and archaeological evidence. With reference to his three arguments, it may be noted that Shastri gave credence to evidence belonging to a late period when there was a considerable interchange of ideas between India and northern Buddhist countries. The word uddhrita in the colophon of the Ekajatā sādhanā does not necessarily mean that this particular form once existed in Tibet, fell into disuse and later on was revived (or restored] by Nāgārjuna. Even if the prototype of Ekajatā is Tibetan in origin, it cannot be taken as a basis for the origin of Tārā in Tibet. For Ekajatā is a late from of Tārā and was introduced in the process of the proliferation of Tārā when she became a powerful goddess and her cult spread far and wide. Nāgārjuna, mentioned in the colophon of this particular sādhanā of Ekajatā, was evidently a Tantric writer, distinct from the great philosopher of the earlier date. The Buddha-Vasishth legend is in connexion with the mode of worship of the second Mahāvidyā, a late conception in Brahmanical Tantricism. The Svatantra-tantra is also a late one and Shastri's location of the mythical Meru and Cholana somewhere in Eastern Turkistan or Indian Tibet is also disputable.

Further, the reference to Cholana is in connexion with Nīlasarasvati, a name of Tārā, the second Mahāvidyā. The literary data show, that the all-powerful goddess Durgā is at the background of the concept of Tārā. It is also very likely that the introduction of Tārā is an attempt to create a Buddhist goddess endowed with the powers, attributed to Durgā, so that she may rival even Durgā herself successfully to elicit homage from the Brahmanical votaries.

The archaeological evidence conforms it. The earliest image of Tārā were found in India only and not in Tibet which, in fact, received the cult long after the introduction of Tārā in India. Buddhism found barely a footing in Tibet only during the reign of Sronbtsan-sgam-po [second quarter of the seventh century A.D.] under the influence of his two Buddhist queens - one, a daughter of King Amśuvarman of Nepal and the other, a Chinese princess. The king and these two queens came to be venerated by the Tibetans in the subsequent period to such an extent that Sron-btsan-sgam-po, the Nepalese princess and the Chinese princess were regarded as incarnations respectively of Avalokiteśvara, green Tārā and white Tārā.

As regards the exact place of the origin of Tārā in India we are, however, not on a sure ground. Some scholars try to prove that Western India is the place of the origin of Tārā. They are of the opinion that the caves at Kanheri, Nasik, Ellora, Aurangabad and Ajanta contain the earliest images of Tārā. Form her sculptural representations in the Buddhist caves in Western Indian and Northern Deccan it appears that her worship was popular at Kanheri, Nasik, Ellora, Aurangabad and Ajanta. They are all ascribable on stylistic grounds to Circa 6th-7th Cent A.D. and as no image of a still earlier date has so far been found in any part of the country, they are probably the earliest representations of Tārā. As already described, she was a deity of navigation and hence it is natural that her worship was widespread on the western coast of India which was humming with maritime activity. For, the trade of India with the Mediterranean world was carried on from the western coast. The merchants and mariners on the western coast invoked Tārā for protection and security in their undertaking and these people either individually or collectively caused to carve her image in the Buddhist caves in Western India. If the evidence at hand is any indication, they were the first to carve image of Tārā. This leads us to surmise that Western India is probably the place of the origin of Tārā and not Ladakh'.

R.S. Gupte expressed his views in favour of the wertern Indian origin of Tārā According to him, the earliest images of Tārā, which are of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., have been found at Ellora. D.C. Sircar, differing from R.S. Gupte, is in favour of the Eastern Indian origin of the cult of Tārā. In this connexion he refers to the illustration of Tārā with the label 'Chandradvipe Bhagavati Tārā' in the Cambridge University Library manuscript (Add. 1643) of the Ashtasahasrikā-Prajāpāramitā copied in A.D. 1015. Chandradvipa (same as Vangala) has been identified by him with portions of the Buckergunge District of Bangladesh. He is of the views that Chandragomin (fifth and sixth centuries A.D.), who settled in Chandradvipa, was very probably inspired by the existing image of Tārā of this place to compose his stotra of Tārā entitled Āryā-Tārā-antarbali-vidhi. He observed that the goddess Tārā of Chandradvipa 'required some time in becoming so famous in Candragomin's age and was therefore being worshipped in Eastern India considerably earlier than the date of the Ellora sculptures.'

K.K. Dasgupta made the following observations. The place of original worship of the Buddhist Tārā is to be found out. Did the Buddhist Tārā originate in Central India or Western Deccan? Or did she originated in Eastern India and eventually spread to different parts of India and outside? The information regarding Dharmapala's banner bearing the effigy of Tārā when judged in the context of the information regarding the construction of a temple of Tārā in Java by the Śailendraraguru who hailed from Gauda would show that the cult of Tārā migrated from Gauda to the Far Eastern Islands. If so, why have we not found images of Tārā of an early period in Eastern India?'

T.V. Mahalingam made a statement about the discovery of an image of Tārā, belonging to the third century A.D. in the ruins of Nagarjunakonda. However, as far as we are aware, not a single image of Tārā has been found in the remains of Nagarjunakonda covering a period from the third century A.D. to the fifth century A.D.

The association of Chandragomin, a disciple of Sthiramati and a Chndrakirti of (sixth century A.D.), with Chandradvipa is based on Tibetan records which, however, do not refer to the existence of an image of Tārā at Chndradvipa prior to the sojourn of Chandragomi to this place. From Tārānātha's account of Chandragomin it appears that Tārā was fairly well-known in some parts of Eastern India before Chndragomin established her image in a temple at Chandradvipa. According to this account, Chandragomin, a native of Varendra (northern Bengal), was a devout worshipper of Tārā and Avalokiteśvara since his young age. He married the daughter, named Tārā, of the king of Varendra. Afterwards his scruples forbade him to live with his wife who bore the name of his ishṭa-devi (chosen goddess). The king, out of revenge, put him in a box and threw him into the Gangā. Through the grace of Tārā he drifted to an island at the confluence of the Ganga and the sea. While besiding in this island which came to be known after him, he established stone images of Tārā and Avalokiteśvara here. Afterwards he went to Simhala and the south. Next he repaired to Nalanda where he entered into debate with Chandrakirti. During his stay at Nalanda, he being once approached for monetary help by a poor woman, prayed before a picture of Tārā painted on a wall. In response, the image is believed to have given all her ornaments with the result that the painted figure came to be known as Tārā without ornaments. On his way to Potala where he spent his last days, he halted at Dhānyakataka (Amaravati) in which place he worshipped Tārā and Avalokiteśvara and constructed temples for them.

According to Tārānātha Chandragomin composed Tārā-sādhanā-śataka which exists in Tibetan translation.

This composition and also Ārya-Tārā-antarbali-vidhi written by him tend to support the Tibetan tradition about Chandragomin and also the prevalence of the cult of Tārā in Eastern India in the sixth century A.D.

Western India and the Deccan have been able to preserve early images of Tārā both in a stage of experiment and fully evolved, is proved by the fact that the Buddhists of this region, had made a very discreet selection of the natural rock of a very durable quality which abounds in the area. This factor is responsible for the prolonged longevity of the sculptures carved on the firm rock-cut walls. Most of the Mahāyāna centres of other regions did not have these natural advantages. The centres in the plains resorted for buildings to wood, bricks and stones which are naturally subject to decay. A look at the monuments at Sarnath, Nalanda, etc. will show how many times a building at a particular site has been built and rebuilt. Monastery No. 1 of bricks at Nalanda has been repaired and renovated as many as eight times. The extant portion of the Main Temple of Nalanda is the result of six successive rebuildings and enlargements. In the face of these constant rebuilding activities, we expect the preservation of the original things in the structural buildings. Though stone was in use for images even in the areas not within the easy reach of rock, the predilection was for perishable materials like clay, terracotta and stucco. Naturally, images of these materials are not expected to withstand the forces of nature for long. Further, the structural monuments along with the sculptures, they contain, are more suceptible to the vandalism of man than the rock-cut caves, most of which are fortunately situated far away from large habitations. In fact, human cupidity for building materials and destructive hands of the invaders are responsible for the large-scale destruction of many monuments and images throughout India. Even stone blocks were removed for building modern houses, broken into pieces for ballasts and even burnt for lime.

In the face of these it is too much to expect to get a connected documentary of images in their proper context in the plains as in the Western Indian caves. Still we have some concrete evidence to show that Western India or the Deccan was not the first to carve images of Tārā, as some images of Tārā of the sixth century A.D. have survived in the exterior wall of the Main Temple of Nalanda itself due to special circumstances detailed below.

The Main temple 3 at Nalanda underwent six successive rebuildings. The stucco-work of the fifth phase of this temple is accidentally preserved due to the fact that the extant portion of the temple of this phase was engulfed by the subsequent enlargement which utilized the remnant of the fifth phase as a core. A portion of this fifth phase has been uncovered during excavation by removing the walls of the later enlargements. The stucco-work of this uncovered portion has been ascribed to the sixth century A.D. Amidst the stucco image [mostly of Buddha, Avalokitesvara, Maitreya and Manjusri] arrayed within framed niches or chaitya-windows, we can recognize at least two figures of Tārā with her typical attribute—utpala.

In one partially-damaged panel [III. 5] on the north wall of the platform of the temple, we find Tārā on the dexter of Potalaka-Lokanatha. Sparsely bejewelled and with the jatā-bhāra, she is seated with palms joined in anjali. Through her left armpit rears up the stalk of an utpala. Around her head is a halo. Corresponding to her, on the sinister of the Bodhisattva, is another seated goodess, also with palms in anjali and with a halo. Bereft ornaments [save for a girdle], she wears the jatā-bhāra. She does not hold any attribute. Evidently, she represents the nascent form of Bhṛkuti whose emblems are yet to be formulated. The bejewelled Lokanātha between the two goddesses is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a lotus with his damaged hands in the dharmachakra-mudrā. From his left armpit rises the stalk of a flower. The high mukuta of the Bodhisattva contains the figure of the Dhyāni-Buddha Amitābha.

In the second panel, Tārā stands on the sinister of Avalokiteśvara [III. 6]. The sparsely-bejewelled figure, with a girdle, valayas and a necklace extant, is badly damaged, but fortunately the utpala, the stalk of which is in her left hand, is preserved at the time of the excavation. The corresponding female figure [Bhṛkuti] also standing, on the dexter, is now damaged. Both the figures have circular haloes. By their sites a kneeling female with hands in anjali. The bejewelled Bodhisattva with his right hands in the vara-mudrā and left hand, with the stalk of a lotus, resting on the high stands with flexions. In his jatā is a figure of Amitābha. Along the side walls of the niche are perched six-seated figures– the two, near the circular halo of the Bodhisattva, representing Dhyāni-Buddhas. The remaining four figures, two each on either side—female. One of them is in the dhyāna-mudrā and another with two palms joined near the chest.

In these two panels Tārā is found in the company of the Bodhisattva. In two stucco panels she appears alone In one [III. 8] of them she, elegantly bejewelled, is seated somewhat flexed in the paryankāsana on a lotus. With the stalk of an utpala in her left hand, she exhibits the vara-mudrā with her right palm. The face and bust of the figures are damaged. This figure is in the western niche of the stupa portion of a small stupa-shaped shrine immediately at the north-eastern corner of the fifth phase of temple 3. The platform of the shrine is erected on the pavement of the fifth phase. Thus, this shrine is later than the phase of Temple 3. The well- preserved head of the figure in the other panel, which is in the western niche of the stupa-shaped tower at the south-eastern corner of the fifth phase of Temple 3, is superb by virtue of its modelling and calm and self-absorbed contemplative expression with eyes nearly closed. Her right hand displays the vara-mudrā, the left hand with the attribute being broken. She is also seated in the paryankāsana.

Here it may be mentioned that there is a small sculpture [III. 7] in the Nalanda Museum [no. 10853] of not later than the sixth century A.D. The sculpture depicts the seated Buddha flanked by a standing male on the dexter and a standing female on the sinister. All the figures having circular haloes and their feet resting on lotuses. The badly-defaced female figure appears to display the abhaya-mudrā with her right hand, the left hand extended along the left thigh. The presence of the halo would indicate her divine nature. She may stand for Tārā in a nascent form.

From this survey, it is abundantly clear that the image of Tārā with her emblems par excellence, vara-mudrā and utpala—was fully evolved at Nalanda in the sixth century A.D. when the figures of Tārā were still in an experimental stage of iconography in Western Indian caves. The Buddhists of Western India of this century, while introducing female deities, were yet uncertain about their characteristics that should be, with the result that the iconography was not crystallized till then in that region. The nascent forms of Tārā of this period thus are seen as holding variantly a red lotus, a lotus-bud or a bouquet composed of a red lotus, an utpala and a kadamba flower with a leaf. It is only in the seventh century A.D. and afterwards that we find the fully-evolved images of Tārā in Western India and the Deccan. Thus there cannot be any doubt that Nalanda evolved images of Tārā earlier than Western India and the Deccan.

From the evidence of images from Nalanda, Chandragomin's evidence in Tibetan texts and the Ārya-Manjusrimūlakalpa, it appears that the cult of Tārā originated in Eastern India. For the actual spot we have still to wait for the future discovery of archaeological data like inscriptions and images either through excavation or exploration, as there is little possibility of discovery of pre-sixth century literature bearing the relevant information in the matter.

CHAPTER 2

TĀRĀ and Her Forms

In the Mahāyānic Buddhist texts we come across an abundance of goddesses, since Mahāyānism represents the popular aspect of Buddhism. In different ramifications of Mahāyānism, the goddesses came to exert an ever-increasing influence. The Ādi Buddha of the Vajrayāna group found a consort in Prajnāpāramitā, known by many other names. His emanations, the Dhyāni Buddhas, had each obtained a divine consort or Śakti of his own, nameiy Vajrasattvātmikā, Locanā, Māmaki, Pāndarā and Ārya-Tārā respectively. The Kālacakrayāna introduced a host of awe-inspiring and terrible goddess, dreadful ones known as Dākinis, to be appeased with mantra (charms), magic circles, offerings and sacrifices. Later Buddhism is, in fact, nothing but a disguised Tantric cult of the Female Principle. Earlier Mahāyānic texts initiate the cult of the Female Principle, and in the texts of Tantric Buddhism like the Guhyasamāja Tantra, the Manjusrimūlakalpa we come across a well developed from of this cult. The Sādhanamālā is the most valuable work on Buddhist iconology which records the latest advances in Vajrayāna doctrines. The Nispannayogāvali is a work on the Maṇḍalas and is remarkable for its richness of information. It contains in all twenty-six Mandalas in twenty-six chapters. All these Mandalas describe numerous deites of Tantric Buddhism. Besides these, other works, such as the Heruka Tantra and Havajra Tantra, Candamahārosana-tantra, Vajravārāhi-tantra, Kriyā-samuccaya, Vajrāvali-nāme-mandalopayika, Yogini-jāla-tantra, Abhidhānottara-tantra. etc., throw a flood of light on the Buddhist goddessess. The Advaya-vajra-samgraha, (edited by M.M. Haraprasad Sastri), which consists of ninteen short works, should also be mentioned in this connection.

A number of gods and goddessess are described in the Manjusrimūlakalpa which is believed to be an earlier work than tne Guhyasamāja, but it is in the latter works that we come across for the first time the idea of a complete pantheon, five Dhāyni Buddhas, their mantras, their mandalas and their śaktis or female counterparts. The Dhyāni Buddhas are described as the progenitors of the five Kulas or families of gods and goddesses. In later texts things are more systematized, but the number and attributes of the deities increased, In Vajrayāna, the highest god Ādi-Buddha or Vajradhara, whose doctrine is explained in Kālacakra-tantra, is the embodiment of Śūnya to whom the Dhāyni Buddhas owe their origin. His Śakti or female counterpart is Prajnāpāramitā, often represented in yab-yum, i.e. in close embrace with her male partner. The Dhāyni Buddhas and their Śaktis are mentioned in detail in the Guhyasamāja. Pāndarā or Pāndaravāsini is the Śakti of Amitābha, Māmaki of Aksobhya, Locanā of Vairocana, Tārā of Amoghasiddhi, Vajradhātviśvari of Ratnasambhava and Vajrasattvātmikā of Vajrasattva. Next come the mortal Buddhas and their Śaktis. The Hinayānists recognise twenty-four bygone Buddhas. The Mahāyānists have several lists from which thirty-two different names have been recovered. The last seven are Vipasyin, Śikhi, Visvabhu, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kaśyapa and Śākyasimha and their Śaktis are Vipaśyanti, Śikhimālini, Viśvadhārā, Kakudvati, Kanthamālini, Mahidhara and Yaśodharā respectively. Besides the Dhyāni and Mānusi (mortal) Buddhas there are Bodhisattvas and their Śaktis. The Bodhisattvas represent a class of deities who derive their origin from the Dhyāni Buddhas and their female counterparts are known by the general name of Śaktis.

The female divinities, that emanate from the Dhāyni Buddha Amitābha, are three in number—Kurukullā, Bhṛkuti and Mahāsitavati. Emanations of Aksobhya are the goddesses Mahācinatārā, Jānguli, Ekajatā, Vidyujjālakarāli, Parnaśābari, Prajnāpāramitā, Vajracarcikā, Mahāmantrānusārini, Mahāpratyangirā, Dhvjāgrakeyura, Vasudharā, Nairātma, Jnanadakini and Vajravidārani. Emanations of Vairocana are Mārici, Usnisavijayā, Sitātapatrā Aparajitā, Mahāsahasrapramardani, Vajravārahī, Cundā and Grahamātrikā. Emanations of Amoghasiddhi Khadiravani Tārā, Mahāśrī Tārā, Vaśya Tārā, Ṣadbhujā Sitatārā, Dhanada Tārā, Sita Tārā, Parnaśābari, Mahāmāyuri, Vajrasṛmkhalā and Vajragandhari, and emanations of Ratnasambhava are Vajratārā, Mahāpratisarā, Vasudharā, Aparajitā, Vajrayogini and Prasanna Tārā.

From the beginning of the Christian era, the popular cults of the Female Principle were gradually becoming the driving force even in the case of the higher religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Vaiṣnavism, Śaivism, etc. In the Gupta age, the ceremonial worship of the images of Viṣṇu, Śiva and the Buddhist and Jain deities, along with their consorts, installed in numerous temples of magnificent proportions, became a very important feature of religious life. The installation of such temples and images being evidently due to the social surplus introduced by the new economic conditions. Buddhism changed qualitatively from the pristine simplicity of an austere moral code to the most complex system of Mahāyāna. The older form of Buddhism lost its hold upon the people giving way to a new movement, the Mahāyāna. The followers of Mahāyāna regarded the Buddha as eternal, without origin and decay, and as such beyond any description whatsoever. They indulged in certain speculations regarding the Buddha's body and gave currency to the trikāya conception which was further elaborated with the rise of a regular Mahāyāna pantheon. The latter came into being with five Dhyāni Buddhas who were said to have issued out of Ādi Buddha (the original Buddha) through contemplation. Each of these Buddhas was associated with a Bodhisattva and a Śakti in the form of a goddess. Of the Bodhisattvas or potential Buddhas, the cults of Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of compassion, and Manjusri, the personification of wisdom, flourished in the Gupta age and survived for so many centuries. The former was associated with the goddess Tārā while the latter with Laksmi or Sarasvati or both. Subsequent Buddhism came under the complete grip of the Cult of Tārā.

As a popular religion, Mahāyānism, in the course of the development, had to make compromises with peoples of widely different tastes and intellectual calibre. Hetrogeneous elements of faith and customs thus began to crop up in the province of Buddhism. In course of time, elements like the mantras and the dhāranis were introduced in Buddhism. In the Tattvaratnāvali, we find Mahāyānism subdivided into two schools, viz., Pāramitā-naya and Mantra-Naya. The Mantra-naya or Mantra-yāna seems to be introductory stages of Tantric Buddhism, from which other of-shoots, like Vajrayāna, Kālacakrayna, Sahajayāna, etc., arose in later times. The philosophy of Tantric Buddhism, as can be reconstructed from the earlier Buddhist Tantric texts like the Manjusrimūlakalpa or the Guhyasāmāja Tantras may be summarized as follows: The gods and goddesses are the symbols of the Buddhist conceptions of four elements and five constituents of a being. Earth is represented by the goddess Locanā, water by Māmaki, fire by Pāndaravāsini, and air by Tārā, while the five constituents of a being are represented by the five Dhyāni Buddhas. Creation is due to Śakti or female energy of the Ādi Buddha, and as such the adept should realise that the female sex is the source of all. The Guhyasamāja Tantra, while describing the different ceremonies in connection with initiation, mentions Prajnābhiṣeka or the initiation of the adept with Prajnā or Śakti. The preceptor takes the hand of Śakti, a beautiful woman, and placing it on the hand of the disciple, says that, as Buddhahood is impossible of attainment by any other means, this Vidyā should be accepted and never abandoned in life. The Vidyās were women of flesh and blood, who later on were deified. The Sammoha Tantra gives a list of the Vidyās whose worship was current in different parts of India. Some of these Vidyās were of well known names of Buddhist and Brahmanical goddesses.

The goddess Tārā occurs in the Manjusrimūlakalpa in her various forms like Bhṛkuti, Locanā, Māmaki, Śvetā, Pāndaravāsini, Sutārā, etc. She is described as Vidyārājni, who is full of compassion. Tārā is elevated to the position of the highest deity in Mahāpratyangirādhārani, a fragment of which is found in Central Asia, in which she is described as a goddess of white colour, wearing a garland of vajras and having the figure of Vairocana on her crown. From the seventh century onwards, we find the exuberance of Tārā-stotras [Cf. the Sragdharāstotras composed in praise of Tārā, by the eighth century Kashmiri poet Sarvajnamitra) and the goddess is raised to the mothership of all Buddhas. According to the Sammoha Tantra, Nila-sarasvati or Ugratārā was born in a lake called Cola on the Western side of the Meru which was included in the Cinadesa. P.C. Bagchi suggests that cola is connected with Kul, Kol, the common word for 'lack' which is found in the names of so many lakes to the west of T·ien-shan. We come across five varieties of Tārā, classified according to colour-green, white, yellow, blue and red. Mention has already been made of her iconological varities. Of other celebrated Buddhist goddesses we have already had the occasion to refer to Parnaśābari, Vasudharā, Mārici, Varjravārāhī, Prajnāpāramitā, etc.

We have seen that the cult of Tārā was taken up by the Śāktas and she was regarded as one of the ten Mahāvidyās. The presiding deities of the Śākta Ṣatcakra, like Dākini, Hākini, Lākini, Rākini, Sākini, etc., owe their origin to the Buddhist conceptions. Buddhist Tantras were translated inso Chinese in the eighth and into Tibetan in the ninth century A.D. A Cambodian inscription refers to the fact that the Tantric texts were introduced there from India at the beginning of the ninth century A.D. As regards the Tantric practices, the Guhyasamāja and a few other early texts refer to meat-eating, union with females and finger poses. Gradually, Tantric ideas associated with the cult of Śakti changed Buddhism to such a great extent that it ceased to be Buddhism at all. Belief in the efficacy of mantras, mandalas and other elements of esoteric practices was firmly established, while the conception of ultimate reality as a duality of Male and Female Principles—Upāya and Prajnā in Buddhism—became the basis of philosophical understanding.

THE TĀRĀS

Tārā, the Merciful One, is born from a tear of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Merciful Lord. She symbolizes compassion and guides the travellors across the infinite ocean of transmigrations. She is Tārā, the brilliant one, the star that guides the navigator on his voyage. Together with Avalokiteśvara she is the protector of mankind, and when invoked, saves people from multitudes of dangers. She is the Princess Bhattārikā, and as such wears the princely attire of a Bodhisattva. Her favourite residence is Mount Potala, from whose heights, she looks over the suffering of this world.

Tārā is the principle feminine deity of Buddhism of later days. With the spreading of Śivaistic influences among Buddhists, numerous other goddesses of the Hindu pantheon were admitted into the religious system of the Mahāyāna ; and, with the advent of a strong current of religious syncretism, they were proclaimed to be difierent aspects of Tārā. Under the influence of pious adoration, her character gradually transformed itself and she assumed the aspect of a Goddess Mother, the Mother of all the jivas (Tib. rGyal-yum), as she is addressed in the prayers and songs composed in her honour.

The Buddhist iconography of Tibet knows twenty-one forms of Tārā. She adopts the five sacred colors and her ardent devotee, the Kaśmirian poet Sarvajnamitra, tells us that the merciful goddess can be seen red as the sun, blue as the sapphire, white as the foam of the ocean or brilliant as the sparkling of gold. And the same poet sings in the exstasy of his devotion : Thy universal form is similar to the crystal which becomes transformed in its aspects when things round is are changed (0) to Shūnya.

To each Dhyāni-Buddha, corresponds an aspect of Tārā with her ritual color :

Dhyāni-Buddhas.	*Tārās.*	*Colour*
1. Aksobhya.	Locanā	blue.
2. Ratnasambhava.	Māmaki	yellow, gold
3. Vairocana,	Vijradhātiśvari.	white'
4. Amitābha.	Pāndarā.	rose
5. Amoghasiddhi.	Tārā	green.

The green aspect of Tārā is one of the most popular ones. Our collection (painting No. 22) possesses a slightly damaged image of the green Tārā, surrounded by the Dhyāni-Buddha Amitābha and the god of riches, Jambhala. She is always seen seated on a lotus throne emerging from the waves of the ocean. Her right hand is making the sign of charity, the left one is holding the flower of the blue lotus, for she is called in stotras (nilotapalakarā devi), She sits in the royal fashion, the right leg hanging down from the throne. This form of Tārā is met regularly, on paintings, representing the parivāra of the Bodhisatta Avalokiteśvara.

1. ORDINARY TĀRĀS

Symbols—*righthand*-Varada Mudrā; *lefthand*-lotus.

We are indebted to Professor Foucher for the classification of the various Tārās in accordance with colour. Strictly speaking, only those should be designated as Tārās, to whom the Mantra, Om. Tāre tuttāre ture Svāhā, is assigned, and there are seven different variations of Tārā carrying the Utpala in the left hand and exhibiting the Varada Mudrā in the right, Out of these seven, two only bear the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown and the others do not bear any image of a Dhyānī Buddha. It is, therefore, difficult to identify the representations of the latter, especially in stone when no colour is present. So a special attention should be paid not only to the particular pose in which the Tārās sit, but also to their companions, if present in order to arrive at a correct identification. Here attempt would be made to indicate the characteristic features of each of the seven varieties of Tārā for correct identification.

(i) GREEN TARA

Amongs the green vareties of Tārā, Khadiravānī and Vaśyatārā are notice under the feminine emanations of Amoghasiddhi. (*i*) Khadiravānī can be identified by the presence of Mārīcī and Ekajaṭā. (*ii*) Vaśyatārā has, as her characteristic feature, the European fashion of sitting (Bhadrāsana). It may be noticed, however that she is described as single and is not accompanied by any other god or goddess. (*iii*) The characteristic features of Āryatārā are that she sits in the Ardhaparyaṅka attitude and like the aforementioned one, is entirely alone. (*iv*) Mahattarī Tārā may be distinguished by the Vajraparyaṅka attitude in which she sits and also by the fact of her being represented without any companion. (*v*) Varada Tārā sits in the Ārdhaparyaṅka like Āryatārā, but she can be easily recognized by the presence of four goddesses, Aśokakāntā Mārīcī, Mahāmāyurī, Ekajaṭā and Jāṅgulī.

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1. In the Sādhanamālā a very large number of goddesses has been designated as Tārās, some with the crest of the Dhyāni Buddhas and others without. In order to clearly distinguish between their forms, it is necessary that they should be treated separately. I have classified them under two heads. The Ordinary Tārās showing the Varada Mudrā in the right hand and carrying the Utpala or the lotus in the left; while the extraordinary forms of Tārā will embrace all goddesses designated as Tārās in the Sādhanamālā.

(ii) WHITE TĀRĀ

Under this head two varieties may be noticed, one is Aṣtamahābhaya Tārā and the other is Mṛtyuvañcana Tārā, also called Sitatārā or Vajratārā. (*i*) The distinguishing feature of Aṣtamahābhaya Tārā is that she sits in the Ardhaparyaṅka attitude and is surrounded by the goddesses, originating from the ten syllables of the Tārā Mantra, identical with the principal figure in appearance. (*ii*) As regards Mṛtyuvañcana Tārā, the only distinctive feature of this goddess is that she bears a wheel on her breast. She is unattended and sits in the Vajraparyaṅka attitude.

II. EXTRAORDINARY TĀRĀS.

The seven different varieties of Ordinary Tārās carrying the Utpala in the left hand and showing the Varada Mudrā in the right have already been described. The other varieties of Tārā, classified according to colour will be dealt with. Their Mantra, however, is not necessarily the famous "Om Tāre tuttāre ture Svāhā" for we have included all the female deities called in the Sādhanamāla by the name of Tārā.

(i) GREEN TĀRĀS

1. Durgottāriṇī Tārā. She has green complexion, lotus as her seat, and garments of white colour. She has four arms carrying in the first pair, the noose and the goad, and showing in the second hand, the lotus and Varada Mudrā.

2. Dhanada Tārā. She carries the book and the rosary in the first pair of hands, while the second pair carries objects similar to those held by Durgottāriṇī. She has an animal for her Vāhana and is accompanied by eight goddesses, originating from the eight syllables of her Mantra, and bears the image of Amoghasiddhi on her crown.

3. Jāṅgulī. She emanates from Akṣobhya and may have three different colours, yellow, white and green. When green, she is four-armed and carries the Triśula, the peacock's tail, a snake and exhibits the Abhaya Mudrā in the fourth hand.

Parṇaśavarī. She is of two colours. When green, she emanates from Amoghasiddhi, and from Akṣobhya when yellow, and as such, both of her forms have already been described. She is generally three-faced and six-armed, but in rare cases may have four arms. The peculiarity of the green variety is that all the three faces are depicted as irritated but smiling (sakrodha-hasitānanām).

(ii) WHITE TĀRĀS

1. Caturbhujā Sitatārā. She bears the images of the five Dhyānī Buddhas on the crown, She has four arms, which exhibit in the first pair, the Utpala, Mudrā, and the rosary and the

Varada in the second. She may be recognized by the presence of two goddesses, Mahāmāyurī and Mārīcī.

2. Ṣaḍbhujā Sitatārā. She bears the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown. She is three-faced and six-armed and has no companions.

3. Viśvamātā. She has been described in the Sādhanamālā as one-faced, with the white complexion of the moon, white garments and a white serpent as her Vāhana. She carries the white lotus in the left hand and exhibits the Abhaya pose in the right. She has not been described as bearing an image of her Sire.

4 Kurukullā as an emanation of Amitabha of red colour generaly assumes the red colour. But when she is two-armed, she has according to the Sādhanamālā, the white colour. She carries the rosary and the bowl of lotus, and her Vāhana is an animal.

Jāṅgulī as an emanation of Akṣobhya ought to be of blue colour. But according to the Sādhanamālā she may have three colours, white, yellow or green. When white, she is one-faced and four armed and plays on the Vīṇā in the first pair of hands, and shows the white serpent and the Abhaya pose in the second.

(iii) YELLOW TĀRĀS

1. Vajratārā. She is yellow, has four faces, eight arms bearing the images of four or five Dhyānī Buddhas on the crown. Both the forms of Vajratārā have been described. She is accompanied by ten goddesses when worshipped in the maṇḍala.

2. Jāṅgulī, The yellow variety of Jāṅgulī has three faces and six arms, and bears the image of the Dhyānī Buddha Akṣobhya on the crown.

3. Parṇaśavarī. When yellow, Parṇaśavarī is an emanation of Akṣobhya, and has three faces and six arms, and a pleasant smile instead of the irritated expression on her faces. This form of Parṇaśavarī is the feminine emanation of Akṣobhya.

4. Bhṛkuṭī is yellow and emanates from Amitābha. She is one-faced and four-armed, shows the Varada Mudrā and the rosary in the two right hands and carries the Tridaṇḍī and the Kamaṇḍalu in the two left hands.

5. Prasanna Tārā. She is also yellow and she is an independent goddess without the figure of any Dhyānī Buddha on the crown. The mantra assigned to her, calls her by the epithets of Amṛtamukhī and Amṛtalocanā, and as a matter of fact, except the face on the top, all the seven faces are represented as having charmingly sweet appearance. She is unlike the other Tārās, benign and peaceful; she is more like Vidyujjvālākarālī, a form of Ekajatā,

then anybody else. The Dhyāna describes her form in the following terms:

हेमवर्णां महाघोरां तारादेवीं महर्द्धिकाम् ।
त्रिनेत्रामष्टवदनां भुजषोडशभूषिताम् ।।

ऊर्ध्वपिङ्गलकेशां सार्द्र शतार्धमुण्डमालाकृताहाराम् ।
प्रत्यालीढपदोपेतां जगत्त्राणां महाबलाम् ।
विचित्रवस्त्रनेपथ्यां हसन्तीं नवयौवनाम् ।।

प्रधानभुलं पीतं दक्षिणे, द्वितीयं नीलं तृतीयं श्यामं चतुर्थं गगनश्यामं वामे कुन्दसन्निभं द्वितीयं रक्तं तृतीयं गगनश्यामं ऊर्ध्वास्यं ध्रूमवर्णाभं महाघोरं मध्यास्यं विकटोत्कटं दक्षिणकरेषु खड्गोत्पल-शरवज्रांकुशदण्डकर्त्रि-अभयधरां वामभुजेषु सपाश-तर्ज्जनि कपाल-धनु-खट्वांगसवज्रपाश-ब्रह्मशिरोरत्नकलशधरां विश्वपद्मचन्द्रस्थां सूर्यप्रभाविभूषितां वामपादेनेन्द्रं दक्षिण-पादेनोपेन्द्रं पादद्वय-मध्ये ब्रह्माण्डं चाक्रम्य स्थितां सर्वावरणविनाशिनीं भावयेत् भोगी ।[1]

"The worshipper should conceive *himself* as Prasanna Tārā, who is of golden complexion, of terrible appearance, bestows prosperity, is three-eyed, eight-faced and sixteen-armed. Her brown hair rises upwards, bracelet is constituted of half a hundred heads wet with blood, who emancipates the universe and is irresistible, stands in the Pratyālīḍha attitude, has smiling faces, is in fulness of youth. Her garments are of variegated colours. Her first face is yellow, the second to the right is blue, the third green, and the fourth blue like the sky; the face to the left is white like the Kunda flower, the second red, and the third blue like the sky; the face on the top is of the colour of smoke, terrible in appearance and is distorted and disfigured. In her right hands are the Khaṭvāṅga, the Utpala, the arrow, the Vajra, the Aṅkuśa, the staff, the Kartri and the Abhaya pose, and in the left, the noose with the Tarjanī, the Kapāla, the bow, the Khatvāṅga, the Vajra, the noose, the head of Brahmā, and the vessel of gems. She stands on the moon over the double lotus, is radiant with the glow of the sun, tramples under her left foot Indra, under the right Upendra, and presses Rudra and Brahmā between the two, and destroys all the Māras". She is represented by the artists of Nepal in modern days, and it agrees with the description of the Sādhana in all important details.

(iv) BLUE TĀRĀS

1. Ekajaṭā. She may have several form with the blue colour and bears the image of her sire Akṣobhya on the crown. She is the emanation of Dhyānī Buddha Akṣobhya

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[1] Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 241

including the terrible form known as Vidyujjvālākarālī with blue colour, twelve faces and twenty-four arms.

2. Mahācīna Tārā. She also bears the image of Akṣobhya on the crown. She gets the name of Mahācīna Tārā as she is believed to have come from Mahācīna, the place where she was originally worshipped. She is the subject of the Mahācīnakrama-Tantra and has been incorporated wholly into the Hindu Tāntric Pantheon.

(v) RED TĀRĀ

There are not many red Tārās in the Sādhanamālā and in fact Kurukullā is the only one that belongs to the red variety. As she bears the image of red Amitābha on the crown, she gets also the red colour being one of his emanations, though her white forms are by no means rare. Kurukullā may also bear the image of the five Dhyānī Buddhas on the crown but the colour would be red in that case also. She is white and two-armed, and red when four six or eight-armed. Only when she is six-armed, she is regarded, as an emanation of the five Dhyānī Buddhas.

MAHĀCINATĀRĀ

Two Sādhanas are devoted to the worship of Mahācinatārā or Tārā of Mahācina (Great China), and two Dhyānas, one in prose and the other in verse, describe the goddess in precisely identical forms. She is also known in Buddhist Tantric literature as Ugratārā, and the Vajrayogini temple at Sanku in Nepal contains in the sanctum a figure of Ugratārā. The principal image is always covered under costly garments and with costly ornaments, but when the priest began to recite the Dhyāna, were left in no doubt that the image was that of Ugratārā. This Ugratārā or Mahācinatārā of the Budhists has been incorporated by the Hindus in their Pantheon under the name of Tārā and the later count her among the ten Mahāvidyā goddesses. The Dhyāna in the Sādhanamālā describes her form in the following words:—

प्रत्यालीढपदां घोरां मुण्डमालाप्रलम्बिताम् ।
खर्व्वलम्बोदरां भीमां नीलनीरजराजिताम् ॥
त्र्यम्बकैकमुखां दिव्यां घोराट्टहासभासुराम् ।
सुप्रहृष्टां शवारुढां नागाष्टकविभूषिताम् ॥
रक्तवर्त्तुलनेत्रां च व्याघ्रचर्म्मावृतां कटौ ।
नवयौवनसम्पन्नां पंचमुद्राविभूषिताम् ॥
ललज्जिह्वां महाभीमां सदंष्ट्रोत्कटभीषणाम् ।
खड्गकर्त्रिकरां सव्ये वामोत्पलकपालधराम् ॥

पिङ्गोग्रैकजटां ध्यायात् मौलावक्षोभ्यभूषिताम् ।
भावनाचलनिष्पत्तौ भवेद् योगी महाकविः ।[1]

"The worshipper should conceive himself as Mahācina-Tārā. She stands in the Pratyālidha attitude, is awe-inspiring, has garland of heads looks. Her complexion is like that of the blue lotus; she is three eyed, one faced, celestial and laughs horribly. She, in an intensely pleasant mood, stands on the corpse, is decked in ornaments of snakes, has red and round eyes, wears the garments of tiger-round her loins, is in youthful bloom. She is endowed with the five auspicious symbols, and has a protruding tongue. She is most terrible, appears fierce with bare canine fangs, carries the sword and the Kartri in the the two right hands and the Utpala and the Kapāla in the two left, Her crown of one chignon is brown and fiery and bears the image of Aksobhya within it."

This is the Dhyāna we find in the Sādhanamālā, (the earliest manuscript of which belongs to A.D. 1165.) According to the Colophon, the Sādhanā for Mahācinatārā has been restored from the Mahācina-Tantra, which should, therefore, be earlier than the earliest extant manuscript of Sāsvatavajra, we may be certain that the Dhyāna, just quoted was not in existence before Sāsvatavajra. Now, in tne Tārārahasya of Brahmānanda who flourished in the middle of 16th century and in the Tantrasāra of Kṛṣnānanda Āgamavāgisa we find almost an identical Dhyāna describing a goddess of the name of Tārā.—

प्रत्यालीढपदां घोरां मुण्डमालाविभूषिताम् ।
खर्वां लम्बोदरीं भीमां व्याघ्रचर्मवृतां कतु ॥
नवयौवनसम्पन्नां पंचमुद्राविभूषिताम् ।
चतुर्भुजां लोलजिह्वां महाभीमां वरप्रदाम् ॥
खड्गकर्त्रिसंयुक्तां सव्येतरभुजद्वयम् ।
कपालोत्पलसंयुक्ता-सव्यपाणीयुगान्वितम् ॥
पिंगोग्रैकजटां ध्यायेत् मौलावक्षोभ्यभूषिताम् ।
बालार्कमण्डलाकार — लोचनत्रयभूषिताम् ॥
जालचित्तमध्यगतां घोरदंष्ट्रां करालिनीम् ।
शवसस्मेरवदनां स्त्र्यलंकारविभूषिताम् ॥
विश्वव्यापकतोयन्त — श्वेतपद्मोपरिस्थिताम् ।
अक्षोभ्यदेविमूर्धन्य स्त्रीमूर्त्तिर्नगरुपधृक् ॥[2]

A comparison of the two Dhyānas will at once reveal how the original composition of

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1. Sādhana Mālā, Vol. I, p. 210
2. Tantrasāra of Krishnanand, p.

Śāsvatatavrjra has been modified in the Tantrasāra in the light of a Hindu Tantric Pandit. Some lines have been added to the original Dhyāna and all the grammatical errors have been rectified: and this seems to be the process of Hinduizing a Buddhist Tantric deity. It is remarkable that the Hindus retained in their Dhyāna, the crest of Aksobhya and this fact at once bespeaks the Buddhist origin of the goddess; as, we know for certain that none of the Hindu gods or goddesses are in the habit of wearing a miniature figure of their sires on the crown. Moreover, Aksobhya is unknown in the Hindu Pantheon except when he is borrowed from the Buddhists,—and the Hindus fail to explain the desirability of putting in his figure on the crown of Tārā.

The accompanying sketches portray the Buddhist form of Tārā or Mahācinatārā and shows in what different forms she is represented in Nepal in modern times. It may be pointed out that the corpse under the feet of the Hindu Tārā is not a corpse properly speaking, but it is the form of Mahādeva's deadbody, to whom she is attached as a Śakti.

1. KHADIRAVĀNI-TĀRĀ

Tārā is the common name applied to a large number of feminine divinities in the Buddhist Pantheon, In the Sādhanamālā. Jānguli, Parnaśāvri, Mahācinatārā, Ekajatā and many others are called Tārās. Khadiravāni is also designated as a Tārā in the Sādhanamāla and is endowed with two hands, which show the Varada Mudrā in the right and the Utpala in the left. She can be recognized by the figures of the two attendant deities, Aśokakāntā Mārici and Ekajatā. One Sādhanā in the Sādhanamālā describes her form and the Dhyāna is quoted as follows:—

हरितामम्मोघासिद्धिमुकुटां वरदोत्पलधारिदक्षिणवामकरां अशोककान्तामारीची-एकजटाव्यग्र-दक्षिणवामदिग्भागां दिव्यकुमारीमलंकारवतीं ध्यात्वा ।[1]

The worshipper should conceive himself as Khadiravāni-Tārā of green colour, who bears the image of Amoghasiddhi on her tiara, shows the Varada pose and the Utpala in the right and left hands respectively. Her right and left sides are occupied by Aśokakāntā Mārici and Ekajatā, and she appears to be a celestial virgin.

She is commonly known as Śyāma-Tārā, because of her green colour, and as the Sādhanā does not mention the particular Āsana, she may be represented in any attitude, either sitting or standing. The sitting image belonging to the Indian Museum, represented with the Dharmacakra Mudrā and two companions, Aśokakāntā Mārici and Ekajatā, may also be identified as Khadiravāni, She bears the stems of the Utpala and the lotus under her two armpits. The Dharmacakra Mudrā displayed in the image, however, may point to its identification as Prajnāpāramitā, but in that case, we fail to explain the presence of the two companions, Aśokakānta and Ekajatā.

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[1] Sādhana Mālā, Vol. I, p. 176.

The Dacca image of Khadiravāni-Tārā is a very interesting specimen. In it we find that the principal goddess, in addition to the two divinities Aśokakāntā and Ekajatā, is accomanied by eight more goddesses, four to the right and four to the left. They are identical in all respects with the principal figure. It seems probable that they represent the eight letters of the Tārā Mantra exactly in the same way as Dhanada Tārā is said to be accompanied by eight attendant deities in the Sādhanā, each originating from a letter of the Mantra for her invocation. It may be remarked by the way that the Tārā Mantra does not consist of eight syllables but ten. When eight goddesses are present, it must be understood that Usnisavijayā and Sumbha originating from the last two letters of the Tārā Mantra, "Svā" and "hā", have not been represented.

2. VAŚYATĀRĀ

Vaśyatārā is also known by the name of Āryatārā, and only one Sādhanā in the Sādhanamālā is assigned to her. There is practically no difference in her from with that of Khadiravāni-Tārā in as much as both display the Varada Mudrā in the right hand and carry the Utpala in the left. Both have the green colour and both bear the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown. In the case of Khadiravānī-Tārā it is not mentioned in what attitude she should stand or sit, but here it is expressly mentioned that Vasyatārā should be seated in the Bhadrāsana, which represents the European fashion of sitting with two legs dangling blow. This Āsana or the attitude of sitting alone distinguishes Vaśyatārā from all other ordinary Tārās carrying the Utpala in the left and exhibiting the Varada Mudrā in the right. The other point of difference between Khadiravani-Tārā and Vaśyatārā is, that the former is accompanied by two goddesses, Aśokakānta Mārici and Ekajatā; whereas, the latter is absolutely un-attended. Khadiravāni may have any attitude, but the Sāddana prescribes that Vaśyatārā must show the Bhadrāsana only.

The accompanying sketch represents Vasyatārā as she is pictured in Nepal. The sketch is important in showing the Bhadrāsana attitude in which the goddess sits.

3. ṢADBHUJĀ SITATĀRĀ

There are many Sādhanās for Sitatārās, or the Tārās of white colour, but in none of them it is mentioned that they should bear the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown. It is only in this case that the crest of the Dhyāni Buddha is expressly mentioned. This white Tārā is three-faced and six-armed, and the Dhyāna describes her in the following terms:

भगवतीं सिततारां त्रिमुखां षड्भुजां पीतनीलदक्षिणेतरमुखीं प्रतिमुखं त्रिनेत्रां वरदाक्षसूत्र-शरधरदक्षिणत्रिकरां उत्पलपद्मचापधरवामपाणित्रयां अर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां चन्द्रासनचन्द्रप्रभां जटामुकुट-

स्थिताममोघसिद्धिं पञ्चमुण्डविभूषितमस्तकां ऊर्ध्वचन्द्रकृतशेखरां नानालङ्कारधरां द्विरष्टवर्षाकृतिमष्टश्मशानमध्यस्थितां हृच्चन्द्रस्थितनिजबीजमात्मानं विचिन्त्य ।[1]

The worshipper should conceive himself as Sitatārā. She is three-faced and six-armed; whose faces to the right and left are yellow and blue in colour and are endowed with three-eyes. Her three right hands show the Varada Mudrā, the rosary and the arrow, and the three left carry the Utpala, the lotus and the bow. She sits in the Ardhaparyanka attitude, and glows like the moon, and bears the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown of chignon. Her head is embellished by the five heads and the crescent; who is decked in many ornaments, is sixteen years old, is situated in the midst of the eight cremation grounds.

The accompanying sketch shows how she is represented in Nepal. It tallies in all respects with the description given in the Sādhanā, except that here she is represented in Vajraparyanka instead of Ardhaparyanka as required by the Sādhanā.

4. DHANADA-TĀRĀ

Dhanada-Tārā is one of the four-armed varieties of Tārā. The special features of this goddess are that she rides and that, like Vajrarārā, she is surrounded by eight goddesses, originating from the eight syllables of the famous mantra "Om Tāre tuttāre ture Svāhā". The symbols that are held in her four hands are also different from all other varieties of four-armed Tārā. Dhyāna describing her form runs as follows:

ताराभगवतीमात्मानं भावयेत् चन्द्रासनप्रभां सौम्यां सत्त्वपर्य्यङ्कस्थां हरितश्यामामेकवदनां द्विलोचनां चतुर्भुजां अक्षसूत्रवरदोत्पलपुस्तकधरां विचित्रवस्त्रालङ्कारवतीम् । ततः ॐ शिरसि, ता ललाटे, रे चक्षुषोः, तु कण्ठे, त्ता बाह्वोः, रे हृदये, तु नाभौ, रे गुह्ये, स्वा जानुनोः, हा पादयोर्न्यस्येत्। ततो हृदये पद्म—चन्द्रस्थस्वबीजरश्मिसञ्चोदितलोचनादिभिर्देवीम् ध्यायात् ।[2]

तारामन्त्र—'ओं तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा'

The worshipper should conceive himself as goddess Dhanada-Tārā. She has the seat and the radiance of the moon, is benign in appearance, sits on an animal, has green complexion, one face, two eyes, and four arms showing the rosary, the Varada pose, the Utpala and the book. She wears variegated ornaments and garments. . .The worshipper should further conceive himself as being offered homage by the goddesses, Locanā and others, and as bearing the image of Amoghasiddhi on the crown."

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1. Sādhana Mālā, Vol. I, p. 216.
2. Ibid, Vol. I, p. 218.

II. GODDESSES FROM DHYĀNI BUDDHAS

Four female deities emanate from a combination of the five Dhyāni Buddhas. They are Vajratārā, Prajnāpāramitā and Kurukullā. Excepting Sitatārā all other goddesses are widely worshipped. The Sādhanamālā shows unusual devotion to Vajratārā in as much as five long Sādhanas are assigned to her, and in all cases the same details of worship are recorded. Her worship is supposed to bring success in all Tantric rites including the six cruel ones. One of the forms of Prajnāpāramitā and one Kurukullā are said to bear the images of the five Dhyāni Buddhas on the crown.

1. VAJRA-TĀRĀ

We know at least three images of Vajratārā, one in the Indian Museum, discovered in the District of Bhagalpore, the second, in Orissa and third in Nepal. The Indian Museum bronze image of Vajratārā is in the from of a lotus and represents the complete Mandala with all the attendant deities. It is construed in such a way as to be opened or closed at will. The petals are eight in number and each has a deity-figure on it. There are several Sādhanās describing the form of Vajratārā. She is said to bear on the crown the images either of the five Dhyāni Buddhas or four or them. The Dhyāna describing her form with the five Dhyāni Buddhas on the crown is as follows:

मातृमण्डलमध्यस्थां तारादेवीं विभावयेत् ।
अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभषिताम् ॥
कनकवर्णनिभां भव्यां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम् ।
पञ्चबुद्धमहामुकुटीं वज्रसूर्य्याभिषेकजाम् ॥

नवयौवनलावण्यां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ।
विश्वपद्मसमासीनां रक्तप्रभाविभूषिताम् ॥

वज्रपाश तथाशङ्खसच्छरोद्यतदक्षिणाम् ।
वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलधनुस्तर्ज्जनीवामधारिणीम् ।
वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगेन साधयेद् भुवनत्रयम् ॥

The worshipper should conveive himself as Vajra-Tārā. She is in the midst of circle of the Eight Mothers, is eight armed, four-faced, and decked in all ornaments; whose complexion

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1. N.N. Vasu, Mayurbhanj Archoeological Survey. p..89.
2. Sādhanāmālā, Vol. I, p. 179.

is like the colour of gold. She is graceful, and resplendent with the auspicious marks of a virgin; who bears the images of the five Dhyāni Buddhas on her great tiara, and is born of the offerings to the Vajra and the Sun. She is effulgent in her blooming youth, has the dangling ear-ornaments, sits on the double lotus, and sends out radiance of red colour. She carries in her right hands the Vajra, the noose, the conch, and the quick arrow, and in the left the Vajrānkuśa, the Utpala, the bow and the Tarjani. Thus conceiving her as sitting in the Vajraparyanka attitude the worshipper may gain the three worlds."

The Sādhanā further goes on to describe the deities constituting the Mandala. In the four cardinal points there should be four goddesses on the four petals of the lotus on which Vajra-Tārā sits:

पूर्वेण पुष्पतारां तु सितवर्णां मनोरमाम् ।
ओंकाराक्षरनिष्पन्नां पुष्पदामकराकुलाम् ।
द्विभुजामेकवक्त्रां च सर्वालंकारभूषिताम् ।।[1]

'On the East is Puspatārā, who is white and elegant in appearance, is born of the syllable 'Om'. She carries the garland of flowers, is two-armed, one-faced and is decked in all ornaments.

दक्षिणे धूपतारां तु कृष्णवर्णां सुरूपिणीम् ।
धूपशाखाकरव्यग्रां सर्वालंकारभूषिताम् ।।[2]

On the south is Dhūpatārā, who is of blue colour, of elegant appearance, carries the Dhūpa (incense) stick and is decked in all ornaments.

पश्चिमे दीपताराञ्च दीपयष्टिकराकुलाम् ।
पीतवर्णां महाभूषां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ।।[3]

On the West is Dipatārā who carries the light stick in her hands, is of yellow complexion, profusely ornamented and has dangling ear-ornaments.

उत्तरे गन्धतारां तु गन्ध शंखकराकुलाम् ।
रक्तवर्णनिभां देवीं भावयेद् गर्भमण्डले ।।[4]

On the North is Gandhatārā, who carries in her hands the conch, has a red complexion, and all these goddesses should be situated in the inner circle."

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1. Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 179.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

The Sādhanā further says that the following Guardians of the Gates should also be meditated upon round the principal goddess, apparently not in the same circle with the four described above.

पूर्वंद्वारे वज्रांकुशीमेकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां वरदांकुशोत्पलहस्तां विकृतवदनां कृष्णवर्णाम् ।[1]

In the Eastern Gate should be Vajrānkuśi, who is one-faced, two armed, carries the Vajrānkuśa and the Utpala, has a distorted faced and blue colour.

दक्षिणद्वारे वज्रपाशीं पीतवर्णां विकृताननां एकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां वज्रपाशहस्ताम् ।

In the Southern Gate is Vajrapāśi of yellow complexion, with one distorted face, and two arms carrying the adamantine nose.

पश्चिमद्वारे वजृस्फोटीं रक्तवर्णामेकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां विकृतवदनाम् वजृस्फोटहस्ताम् ।[3]

In the Western Gate is Vajrasphoti, who has red complexion, one distorted face, two arms, and clapping hands.

उत्तरद्वारे वजृघण्टां श्वेतवर्णां एकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां विकृतवदनां वजृघण्टाहस्ताम् ।[4]

In the Northern Gate is Vajraghaṇṭā, who is white, onc-faced, two armed, has a distorted face and carries a bell surmounted by a Vajra."

All these goddesses stand in the Ālidha attitude, with the right leg stretched forward, on the seat of the sun. They have sun-like radiance, are surrounded with a fiery halo and are decked in ornaments of snakes. The upper region is occupied by Usnisavijayā and the lower by Śumbha.

The reason why Vajra-Tārā is surrounded by these goddesses is that each of these goddesses originates from each of the ten letters of the Mantra of Vajratārā, which is 'Om Tāre tuttāre ture Svāhā', consisting of ten syllables. Each syllable brings forth a goddess and these goddesses are said to be the embodiments of the Teṇ Pāramitās of the Mahāyāna doctrine.

The following are some of the instances in which the Mantra of Vajratārā might be applied with success. A knot should be tied at the end of the cloth over which the Mantra has been recited seven times. If any man wearing this cloth goes even to the most inaccessible

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1. Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 179.
2. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 180.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

regions of the Vindhya mountains he will not be molested. Tigers, thieves, crocodiles, lions, snakes, elephants, buffaloes, bears, bulls and the like will fly away or even be destroyed at mere recital of the name of the goddess. If one hundred and eight blue lotuses are offered into the fire with this Mantra any woman would be subdued. The feather of a crow over which this Mantra has been recited thirty-two times, if kept concealed with the house of an enemy, will destroy it mysteriously in course of a week. It is useless to multiply instances. In fact, in all matters Vajratārā is sure to ensure success to the worshipper and that is the reason why she is so popular among the Vajrayānists.

Among the three extant images of Vajratārā, the one in Calcutta may be identified with this variety of Vajratārā. As the Dhyāni Buddhas are not given she may, however, be regarded as an emanation of the four Dhyāni Buddhas also. The Orissa image belongs to the combination of four Dhyāni Buddhas. while the third one belongs to another variety of Vajratārā also emanating from four Dhyāni Buddhas.

Vajratārā is the only emanation of a combination of four Dhyāni Buddhas, but she has another form emanating from five. Here also she is accompanied by the usual eight goddesses (Mothers), in the four cardinal points and in the four intermediate corners. While the upper regions is occupied by Usnisavijayā, Śumbha remaining below. Here also the Mantra is the same and each syllable of the Mantra brings forth one of the surrouding deities. In essence she is the same as has previously described and she performs very nearly the same functions, and is invoked in the same rites including the six cruel Tantric ones.

Several Sādhanās describe two distinct forms of this goddess. In one she will be identical with the form described before, under the emanations of the five Dhyāni Buddhas, with the difference that she should have the crest of the four Dhyāni Buddhas only instead of five. The Orissa image of Vajratārā belongs to this variety, although all the ten goddesses constituting the Mandala are not represented. It has four companions only and these probably represent the four deities of the four cardinal points, Puspatārā, Dhūpatārā, Dīpatārā and Gandhatārā. The deity sitting below to the left of the principal goddess may be identified with Gandhatārā who is required in the Sādhanā to hold the conch-shell full of scents; for, this figure clearly shows the conch over the two hands held in the Samādhi Mudrā.

The second form differs a little from the above as the weapons are not the same, or in the same order either. She carries in her four left hands the Utpala, the Bow, the Ankuśa, and the Tarjanipāśa, and in the four right the Vajra, the arrow, the conch and the Varada pose.

One stone image of second variety of Vajratārā has been discovered at the Sarasvatisthān close to the Svayambhu Temple in Nepal. It represents the goddess in the Vajraparyanka attitude with a form and weapons identical with the one described above. Though the crest of the four Dhyāni Buddhas is not present, yet, as this form agrees in all details with the Vajratārā emanating from the combination of the four Dhyāni Buddhas, we may reasonably regard the identification as correct.

One of the Sādhanās of Vajratārā enumerates the four Divine Buddhas, and it is curious that Ratnasambhava is not one of them. This fact, again, points to his late incorporation into the brotherhood of the Divine Buddhas.

Sitatārā, as the name implies, is a Tārā of the white variety, with one face and four arms. She is accompanied by two goddesses, Mārici and Mahāmāyuri. It may be remembered that Khadiravāni is also accompanied by Mārici and Ekajatā; but the difference is that Khadiravāni is two-armed whereas Sitatārā is four-armed. The Dhyāna contained in the only Sādhanā in the Sādhanamālā describes her form in the following terms:

तारां भगवतीं शुक्लां त्रिनेत्रां चतुर्भुजां पञ्चतथागतभुकुटीं नानालंकारां भुजद्वयेनोत्पलमुद्रां दधानां दक्षिणभुजेन चिन्तामणिरत्नसंयुक्तवरदां सर्व्वसत्त्वानामाशां परिपूरयन्तीं वामेनोत्पलमञ्जरीं विभ्राणां ध्यायात् । तस्या दक्षिणपार्श्वे मारीचीं पीतां चन्द्रासनां नीलाम्बरां द्विभुजां वामेन रक्ताशोकपल्लवधरां दक्षिणेन सितचामरधरां रक्तकञ्चुकाभरणां वामपार्श्वे महामायूरीं प्रियङ्गु श्यामां द्विभुजां वामेन मयूरपिच्छधरां दक्षिणेन चामरधरां एवं विचिन्त्य ।[1]

"The worshipper should meditate in himself the goddess Sita-Tārā, of white complexion with three eyes and four arms; who bears the images of the five Dhyāni Buddhas on the crown, is decked in many ornaments, exhibits the Utpala Mudrā in the first pair of hands, displays the Varada Mudrā along with the Cintāmani in the right, and carries the Utpala bud in the left, and fulfils the prayers of all beings.

To her right is Mārici, who is yellow in complexion, sits on the moon, is clad in blue garments, is two-armed, and carries the both with red Aśoka flowers in the left hand and the fly-wish in the right. and who wears red bodice and ornaments.

To her left is Mahāmāyuri of green complexion like the Priyangu fruit, who is two-armed and carries the tail of a peacock in the left hand and the fly-whisk in the right.

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[1] Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 215.

SECTION II

TĀRĀ AND INDIAN ICONOGRAPHY

The great importance and populrity of Tārā in India of especially in Eastern India are reflected in the numerous representations of the goddess found in the Buddhist centres. In fact, in some centres (like Ratnagiri) her figures are found to be much more than those of Avalokiteśvara, However, the exposed sites of Eastern India have not yet been able to compete with Tibet and other countries having Lamaistic temples in the prolific multiplication of Tārā's iconic forms with multiple heads and arms having various āyudhas.

Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, in his Indian Buddhist Iconography, has classified various forms of Tārā found in the sādhanās according to their respective colour. Thus, under the green Tārā he has enumerated (i) Ārya-Tārā, (ii) Dhanada-Tārā, (iii) Durgottārini-Tārā, (iv) Jānguli, (v) Khadiravāni-Tārā, (vi) Mahāsri-Tārā, (vii) Mahattari-Tārā, (viii) Parnasābari, (ix) Varada-Tārā(x)Vasyādhikara-Tārā. Under the white Tārā are mentioned (i)Ashtmahābhayā-Tārā (ii) Jānguli, (iii) Kurukullā, (iv) Mrtryuvanchanā-Tārā, (v) Chaturbhujā-Sita-Tārā, (vi) Shadbhujā-Sita-Tārā and (vii) Viśvamātā, The yellow forms of Tārā, according to him, are (i) Bhṛkuti, (ii) Jānguli, (iii) Parnaśābari, (iv) Prasanna-Tārā and (v) Vajra-Tārā, While the blue forms are only two, one being Ekajatā and the other Mahāchina- Tārā, the red form is represented by a single divinity, Rakta-Kurukullā.

The Sādhanamālā however, prescribes the sacred Tārā-mantra (om Tāre tuttāre ture svāhā) for only eleven out of them, others having different mantras. These eleven are Ārya-Tārā, Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā, Dhanada-Tārā, Durgottārini-Tārā, Khadiravāni-Tārā, Mahāsri-Tārā, Mahattari-Tara, Mrityuvanchanā-Tārā, Vajra-Tārā, Varada-Tārā and Vasyādhikara-Tārā. All of these eleven bear the utpala as an attribute. Among the remaining forms noted by Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, Chaturbhujā-Sita-Tārā, Shadbhujā-Sita-Tārā, Mahāchina-Tārā Prasanna-Tārā, Ekajatā and (Tārodbhavā) Kurukullā have the utpala. Jānguli and Parnasābari are noted in one are two sādhānas as Jānguli-Tārā (Sādhanā no. 106) and Parnasābari-Tārā (Sadhana no. 150). Bhṛkuti is neither noted as Bhrikuti-Tārā, nor does she holds the utpala; her mantra is also different.

The Sādhanamālā contains dhyānas of two more forms of Tārā. One of the two is Rajasri-Tārā (Sādhana no. 308) who is noted as gauri and Viśvamātā. Though her mantra is not mentioned in the sādhanā, she is stated to be nilotpalahastā. The other is Pitha-Tarā (Sadhana

Nos. 310 and 311) who bears the utpala as one of the attributes and whose mantra is the sacred Tārā-mantra.

Apart from the sādhanās devoted to these forms of Tārā, there are sādhanās where the principal deity is surrounded by companions, some of whom bear names ending with Tārā. Thus, in the sādhanā (Sādhanā no. 174) of the eight-armed Kurukullā of red complexion, the goddess is surrounded by eight four-armed companions, namely Prasanna-Tārā, Nishpanna-Tārā, Jaya-Tārā, Karna Tārā, Chundā, Aparājitā, Pradipa Tārā and Gauri Tārā; one of the attributes of all of them is the utpala. Further, the eight-armed Vajra-Tārā (Sādhanā no. 95) is encompassed by Pushpa-Tārā, Dhūpa-Tārā, Dipā-Tārā, Ankuśa-Tārā, Pāśa Tārā, Sphota-Tārā, Āveśa-Tārā, Śumbha-Tārā and Ushnishavijaya-Tārā. While the first four are the deificatoins of the materials for the ritualistic worship, the next four are the personifications of the āyudhās. Then again in Sādhanā (no. 107,) the four-armed Dhanada-Tārā is surrounded by Vajra-Tārā, Ratna-Tārā, Padma-Tārā, Buddha-Tārā, Pushpa-Tārā, Dhupa-Tārā, Dipa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā, all of whom carry in their left hand an utpala. The first four In view of the attributes in their right hands and colour, are to be associated with four of the Dhyāni-Buddhas.

Many more forms of Tārā are found represented in the images and illustrations on the manuscripts found in Tibet and China. Waddell has described twenty-seven forms of Tārā from Tibetan sources. The names of these forms are as follows:

(i) Tārā, the supremely valiant: Pravira-Tārā;

(ii) Tārā of white-moon brightness: Chandrakānti-(Gauri)-Tārā;

(iii) Tārā, the yellow-coloured; Kanakavarna-Tārā;

(iv) Tārā, the victorious hair-crowned: Ushnishavijayā-Tārā;

(v) Tārā, the Hum shouter: Humsvaranādini-Tārā;

(vi) Tārā, the three world best worker: Trailokyavijaya-Tārā;

(vii) Tārā, the suppressor of strife: Vādipramardini-Tārā;

(viii) Tārā, the bestower of supreme power: Vasitottama-Tārā;

(ix) Tārā, the best providence: Varada-Tārā;

(x) Tārā, the dispeller of grief: Śokavinodana-Tārā;

(xi) Tārā, the cherisher of the poor: Vipannirbarhana-Tārā;

(xii) Tārā, the brightly glorious: Mangalaloka-Tārā;

(xiii) Tārā of the universal mature deeds: Paripachaka-Tārā;

(xiv) Tārā with frowning brows: Bhrikuti-Tārā;

(xv) Tārā, the giver of prosperity: Kalyanadā or Mahaśānti-Tārā;

(xvi) Tārā, the subduer of passions: Raganiśudana-Tārā;

(vvii) Tārā, the supplier of happiness: Sukhasādhana-Tārā;

(xviii) Tārā, the excessively vast: Praphulla or Samkusumita-Tārā;

(xix) Tārā, the dispeller of distress: Duhkhadāhana-Tārā;

(xx) Tārā, the realization of spiritual power: Siddhisambhava-Tārā;

(xxi) Tārā, the completely perfect: Paripūrana-Tārā;

(xxii) The excellent white Tārā triad: Sita Tārā traimandala;

(xxiii) Tārā the saviour from ḍeath: Mrityuvanchana-Tārā;

(xxiv) the seven-eyed white Tārā;

(xxv) Tārā, the defender from eight dreads: Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā;

(xxvi) Kurukullā Tārā; and

(xxvii) Traimandala Khadiravana: Khadiravāni-Tārā.

W.E. Clark has furnished the names of many more forms of Tārā in the Sanskrit Index of his Two Lamaistic Pantheons. These names, excluding those noticed by Waddell are (1) Aparajitā-Tārā, (2) Ashṭabhujā-Tārā, (3) Ārya (Śyāma)-Tārā, (4) Ārya-Chundā-Tārā, (5) Uddiyāna (Pithesvari)-Tārā, (6) Kapāla (bhattārika)-Tārā, (7) Kruddha (Kāli)-Tārā, (8) Gandha-Tārā, (9) Chintāmani-Tārā, (10) Chatarbhujā-chintāmani chakra-Tārā. (11) Chintāmanichakra-Sita-Tārā, (1.) China-Tārā, (13) Chinākrama-Tārā, (14) Jagadvāsi-Tārā, (15) Jānguli-Tārā, (16) Trimukhā-shadbhujā-Sita-Tārā, (17] Divasantaratrikruddha Tārā, [18] Dipa-Tārā [19] Durgottārini-Tārā. [20] Dhanada-Tārā, [21] Dhūpa-Tārā, [22] Nila-Tārā, [23] Padma-Tārā, [24] Paripūrna [or Parinishpanna]-Tārā, [25] Pachaka-Tārā, [26] Pita-Tārā, [27] Pushpa-Tārā, [28] Buddha-Tārā, [29] Mangalotpadana-Tārā, [30] Mārasudana-Tārā, [31] Rakta-Tārā, [32] Ratna-Tārā, [33] Vanaratnakrama-Sita-Tārā, [34] Sita-Vijaya-Tārā, [35] Vajra-Tārā, [36] Grol-ljan-kha-che-panchẹn-lugs [Kasmira mahāpanditakrama-Śyāma-Tārā], (37) Shadanga (gnan)-Tārā, (38) Shadbhujā-Sita-Tārā, (39) Sarvārthasādhana-Tārā, (40) Jo-lugs-sgrol-dkar Ārya (Atisa)-krama-Sita-Tārā, (41) sGrol-dkar-kha-che-pan-chen-lugs (Kasmira-mahāpandita-krama-Sita-Tārā), (42) gnan-lugs Sita-Tārā, (43) ba-rihi-lugs Sita-Tārā, (44) Siddhida-Tārā, (45) Sukhadā-Tārā, (46) Svapnaḍeseka-Tārā, (47) bKah-gdams-lha-bzhi-nan-gi-sgrol-ma (Tārā from among the Four bKah-gdams Divinities), (48) Chaturbhujā-Chintāmanirājni and [49] Garbhasuvarnasutra Sri.

The total of these two lists would thus be seventy-six. This total, again does not include some of the forms noted in the Sādhanamāla. Therefore, it is very likely that Tārā, in the later stage of Buddhism, was conceived, like Avalokiteśvara in on hundred and eight forms with distinctive names. Earlier, we have the occasion to refer to the Ārya-Tārā-bhattārikā-nāmashtottaraśataka-stotra, a litany of 108 names of Tārā. Many of these names do not tally with those found in the Tibetan sources, but still the sacred number (108] is significant, and we give the detailed accounts of the popular forms of Tārā.

I. ĀRYĀ AṢṬA-MAHĀBHAYA TĀRĀ

From the survey, sculptures & Sādhnās, it appears that Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā is one of the early forms of Tārā. Conceived in the early seventh century A.D., if not in the sixth century itself, Tārā in this form continued to be worshipped at least up to the twelfth century A.D. in India. The form was fairly popular in Eastern India, which is but natural in view of her ever-readiness to help the devotees from the eight great perils. She was particularly esteemed by the trading class and pilgrims who used to undertake long journeys through forests, rivers, oceans and unknown towns and who were to reckon with most of these perils. This is also supported by inscriptional evidence.

The form of the main figure, so far as the attributes in the hands are concerned, remains the same throughout the ages. In the early images we find her usually standing, while in the later images she is mostly seated in the lalitāsana. She is almost invariably surrounded by her eight attendant deities. While the attribute in the left hand of the latter is always an utpala, their right hand is either in the vara-mudrā or in the abhaya-mudrā. They are seated variantly in the vajra-paryankāsana, mahārājalilā or lalitāsana. In some cases they are in a flying posture, rushing, in answers to the prayers, to the aid of the distressed persons who are often depicted in the images.

Dhyāni-Buddhas are generally absent in images. One of the images surveyed by us presents all the Dhyāni-Buddhas on the top of the back-slab, Amoghasiddhi being immediately above the head of the main figure. In another image Amoghasiddhi alone is depicted above the head of the main figure. This would suggest the affiliation of Ashtamahābhaya Tārā with Amoghasiddhi, though the available sādhanā does not mention the spiritual sire of the goddess.

According to the sādhanā, the complexion of all the nine goddesses is white. This could not be verified, as the painted colour on the stone (khondalite and black stone) images has not survived. On the basis of the figure of Amoghasiddhi immediately above the head of Tārā in some images and from the miniature painting of the manuscript of the Cambridge University Library, it is reasonable to infer that Tārā in this form was also conceived as green. In this connexion a reference may be made to a Tibetan painting of the mandala of Amoghapāśa published by G. Roerich. Eight figures of Tārā, assuring devotees threatend by eight perils, are depicted on this painting three above the mandala and five below. All the figures are green in complexion and seated in the lalitāsana. With the left hand holding the stalk of an utpala, they have extended their right palm above the head of the distressed seated devotee. The perils elephant, lion, snake, fire, demon, king's guard, etc. are prominently depicted, one each near a figure of the goddess.

As already noted, the available sādhanā does not enjoin any companion goddess, though in the image from Vijrayogini, Ekajatā and Mahāmāyuri flank Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā. In this connexion attention may be drawn to the representation of the goddess on a Tibetan scroll published by G. Tuccci. In this painting Tārā, green in complexion, is seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus above a throne. Displaying the vara- mudrā with her right palm, she carries the stalk of a lotus with her left hand. Above the halo is Amitābha, while by its sides are Vairochana and Akshobhya. On the right side of the goddess is the standing figure of Aśokakāntā-Mārichi, yellow in colour with palms [in dharmachakra-mudrā] near the chest and an aśoka-branch rearing up over her left shoulder. The corresponding companion on the left side is the fierce-looking Ekajatā, blue in complexion, holding a knife and a skull-cut. Beyond this composition and along the edges of patnting several other figures are painted. Eight of these are two-armed forms of Tārā assuring devotees threatened by perils. Seated in the mahārājalilā, all of them display the abhaya-mudrā with one of their hands, the other hand touching the head of the afflicted. The stalk of the utpala is found near one of the shoulders. Among the remaining figures, most of which are multi-armed [four, six, eight, ten and twelve), the figures of Kurukullā and Vasudharā can be recognized,

From the above it is certain that main figure of the goddess may be either unattended or flanked by companion goddesses like Ekajatā, Mahāmāyuri, Aśokakāntā-Mārichi and others. The appearance of these companion goddesses in the representations of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā no doubt is a later development due to the increasing importance of Tārā.

Benoytosh Bhattachaya in his Indian Buddhist Iconography gives following short account of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā. 'The distinguishing feature of this form of Tārā is that she sits in the Ardhaparyanka attitude and is surrounded by ten goddessess, originating from the ten syllables of the Tārā mantra: Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture Svāhā. These ten deities are identical in appearance with the principal deity,'

the Sādhanamālā prescribes only eight and not ten, goddesses around the principal deity, there being thus nine figures of Tārā [nava-devis) altogether.

Benoytosh Bhattacharya did not illustrate the the goddess with the help of photographs or line-drawings. On the contrary, he has identified an image in the Dacca Museum, which definitely represents Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā, with that of Khadiravāni-Tārā. Before examining this, we shall go through the dhyāna as prescribed in the Sādhanamālā. Only one sādhanā is devoted to Āryāshtamahābhaya-Tārā in the Sādhanamālā. The relevant portion is quoted below:

कृत्वा साधनमेवेदं नवदेवी—समन्वितम् ।
हत्वाऽष्टभयं च सर्वं करोतु जगदुत्तरम् ॥[1]

From the above dhyāna we gather the following features of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā.

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1. Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 208.

The one-faced and two-armed goddess, white in complexion, sits in the ardha-paryankāsana attitude on a lotus. Bejewelled in all kinds of ornaments and with fragrant flowers on her hair, she, of blooming youth, displays the vara-mudrā with her right hand and holds an utpala with her left. In the intermediate space there are eight more Tārās, similar to the main deity in all respects. Thus, the sādhanā conceives nine goddesses (nava-devis) of identical form together.

From the mantra it appears that the main figure will be in the centre and the remaining eight in the eight directions. The complete mantra (om Tāre tuttāre ture svāhā) is meant for the central figure and eight syllables of this mantra are possibly intended for the rest,—'om for the eastern one, tā for the southern one, re for the western one, tu for the northern one, ttā for the south-eastern one, re for the south-western one, tu for the north-western one and re for the north-eastern one.

It is also enjoined that gandha, naivedya and other things are to be offered with hands in the utpala-mudrā. By worshipping the goddess in her nine-fold form the devotee gets rid of eight perils.

The sādhanā does not specify the eight great perils, However, we know from the literary and archaeological [inscriptions and images] sources what these perils are. The already-noted Ārya-Tārā-sragdharā-stotra of Sarvajnamitra of eighth century A.D. and the Dambal [Karnataka] inscription of the Western Chalukya King Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI. dated A.D. 1095-96, enumerate these mahābhayas as hari [lion], kari [elephant], śikhi [fire], phani [snake]. taskara [thief], nigala [fetter], jalārnava [water] and piśācha [demon]. These as well as other inscriptions like Nalanda inscription of Vipulaśrimitra of first half of the twelfth century A.D. invoke Tārā, like the sādhanā, for deliverance from eight great fears. Most of the sculptures of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā also depict graphically these eight dangers, from which devotees are being saved,

The Brahmanical goddess Devi (Durgā), long before the emergence of the Buddhist goddess Tārā, is endowed, in the Mahābhārata and Devi-māhātmya section of the Mārkandeya-purāṇa, with the quality of removing all kinds of troubles and pitfalls, including the eight perils, faced by the people. The date of the final reduction of the Devi-māhātmya section according to V.S. Agrawala, is the end of the fourth century A.D. In the Buddhist pantheon we find the all-compassionate Avalokiteśvara initially as the saviour of the distressed from the eight great perils. There are many figures of Avalokiteśvara in this role, in the caves of the Deccan like Ajanta, Badami, Kanheri, Aurangabad and Ellora. None of these figures is earlier than the fifth century A.D. In the panels of the fifth and early sixth century A.D. Avalokiteśvara stands alone with devotees fervently praying for rescue from the eight dangers, which are also graphically depicted. In some of the panels eight miniature figures of Avalokiteśvara are also shown rushing to the aid of the afflicted. In one (Ill. 3) of the panels (Cave 90) of Kanheri, which is referrable to the second half of the sixth century A.D., Avalokiteśvara is found flanked by two companion goddesses, possibly the nascent forms of Tārā and Bhrikuti. Here too are seen miniature figures of Avalokiteśvara flying to the rescue of the endangered persons in response to their prayers.

Soon afterwards we find Tārā, who appeared first as a companion of Avalokiteśvara, relieving the Bodhisattva of his active function of saving devotees from eight perils and as a result images of Tārā only and not of Avalokiteśvara as a saviouress from perils are encountered from seventh century onwards in India. The earliest representation of Tārā in this role, so far traced, exists in cave no. 9 of Ellora, attributed to the seventh century A.D.

In Eastern India several images of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā have been found. The earliest of such images, so far discovered, lies at Ratnagiri (District Cuttack, Orissa). The khondalite sculpture (Ill. 9) shows in the centre a life-size figure of the elegantly-bejewelled Tārā, standing with slight flexions and a graceful posture on a double-petalled lotus. Clothed in a diaphanous sādi and an upper garment, the two-armed goddess, with half-closed eyes and beautiful facial expression, carries in her left hand the stalk of an utpala, the right hand in the varamudrā, and resting against a lotus.

On two sides of Tārā, are depicted the eight perils (ashta-mahābhāyas), carved in two vertical rows of four panels each The endangered persons are shown praying fervently for succour to Tārā, who is rendered in a miniature form in each of the eight panels. These miniature epiphanies of Tārā, with attributes similar to those of the main figure, are, however, seated in the vajra-paryankāsana, each on a viśva-padma, and above the perils.

Beginning with the bottom panel of the sinister-flank we find the following:

(i) a man, standing in front of flames, with folded hands is beseeching the help of Tārā, depicted immediately above (agni-bhaya): in a flank.

(ii) a man, confronted by a terrible-looking goblin, is standing in a pose similar to that of the preceding (piśācha-bhaya);

(iii] a fettered man is in the clutches of a person who menacingly brandishes his sword, above which is Tārā as usual (nigala-bhaya);

[iv] a man. imperilled by an elephant, is praying with folded hands to Tārā [hasti-bhaya];

[v] [on the top of the dexter] a standing man, afraid of a snake which with its tongue displayed has issued from rocks, prays for deliverance to Tārā [sarpabhaya];

[vi] a standing man, attacked by a lion, is praying with folded hands to Tārā [simhabhaya];

[vii] a man in a pose similar to that of the preceding form is the target of an arrow of a brigand who draws his bow to the full [taskara-bhaya]; and

(viii) three persons, including a boatman, in a sinking boat invoke Tārā for relief [jalārnava-bhaya].

Of exquisite workmanship, the image is stylistically ascribable to the end of the eighth century A.D. The vivid depiction of eight great dreads, leaves no room for doubt about the identification of the image with Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā. However, the main figure is in a standing pose and the miniature figures are in the vajra-paryankāsana instead of all being in the ardha-paryankāsana as required in the sādhanā. There could be two explanations for this difference, either there were variant sādhanas or the published sādhanā was composed at a later date when the form described by it was the standard one.

Another standing khondalite image (III. 10), also from Ratnagiri, is now in the Patna Museum. Standing in a graceful tribhanga pose on a double-petalled lotus, the main figure of Tārā, with half-closed eyes, noble bearing and exquisitely-rendered elongated bodily features, holds in her left hand the stalk of an utpala [broken). The damaged right hand was obviously in the vara-mudrā. Draped in a diaphonous sādi and a scarf worn in an upaviti fashion, she is richly bejewelled. The eight great perils are depicted in two vertical rows flanking the main figure. In each panel of the perils a flying figure of the two-armed Tārā with her right hand in the abhaya-mudrā and the left holding the stalk of an utpala is seen for the rescue of the afflicted supplicant. Beginning with the dexter bottom and ending in the sinister bottom are:

(i) A standing beseeching figure confronted by a lion emerging from a rock; (ii) a similar figure imperilled by an elephant (broken); (iii) a figure in front of flames of fire; (iv) a figure minaced by a snake (damaged) which has issued from rocks; (v) a figure in the clutch of a robber armed with a sword and a shield; (vi) a figure threatened by a demon; (vii) a figure in a sinking boat; and (viii) a man in front of another (presumably an official) one.

Immediately above the head of the main figure are five Dhyāni-Buddhas seated in a row. Amoghasiddhi being in the centre right above the crown of the main figure of Tārā. On the extreme dexter is Amitābha and on the corresponding sinister is Vairochana. By the side of the former is Ratnasambhava and that of the latter is Akshobhya. Stylistically, the image is not earlier than the tenth century and may be even of the eleventh century A.D. This image too differs from the published sādhanā not only in the stance of the main figure but in the flying posture of the eight miniature figures of Tārā. Further, the hand of the eight miniatures are in the abhaya-mudrā, instead of the prescribed vara-mudrā.

The sādhanā does not associate Ashṭamahābhaya-Tārā with any Dhyāni-Buddha. But here we find five Dhyāni-Buddhas on the back-slab. The depiction of Amoghasiddhi right above her crown would indicate the association of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā, at least in one tradition with Amoghasiddhi. This would further lead us to presume that the complexion of this form of Tārā might have also been green. the colour of Amoghasiddhi. According to the sādhanā, the colour is white.

Nalini Kanta Bhattasali has identified an image of black stone from Sompara (a hamlet in the village of Vajrayogini, District Dacca, Bangladesh), now in the Dacca Museum, with Śyāma Tārā. B. Bhattacharyya takes this image for Khadiravāni Tārā. His remarks in respect of this image are as follows. 'The Dacca image of Khadiravāni Tārā is a remarkable instance of the deification of the Tārā Mantra. The main figure in accordance with the Sādhanā carries the Utpala in the left hand and shows the Varada mudrā in the right, and she is flanked on either side by Aśokakāntā and Ekajatā. But on the aureole there are eight female figures identical in appearance with the principal figure. They obviously represent none but the eight syllables of the Tārā Māntra "Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture", and the two others, Usnisavijayā and Śumbha, being omitted,"

As already pointed out by Debala Mitra, the image in question definitely represents Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā. He however, did not furnish a detailed description of the image.

Dressed in a sadi, the richly-bejewelled central figure of Tārā is seated in the lalitāsana, with her pendant right foot on a fully-blown double-petalled lotus. With her right palm (having a circular mark) in the vara-mudrā on the right knee, she with a calm facial expression, holds in her slightly-raised left hand the stalk of an utpala. A leaf shaped projection against her coiffure bears Amoghasiddhi in the abhaya-mudrā. Behind her back is the back-rest of a throne. There are eight miniature figures of Tārā, one above the other, on either side of the goddess. They are all seated in the lalitāsana, with their right leg pendant, on a viśvapadma with right hand in the abhaya-mudrā against the chest and left holding the stalk of an utpala. By the side of these miniatures are tiny figures also. About them Bhattasali observes. 'All these goddesses have their companions, altogether ten in number; of them only the 3rd on the right side is a female; the rest are all males. The first two goddesses on the right side have respectively a lion and an elephant as their Vāhana.' As may be seen in the photograph, most of the tiny figures have their right hands raised, invoking the help of Tārā. There is, thus, no difficulty about their identification with the distressed persons. The lion and the elephant do not obviously represent the vāhanas as stated by Bhattasali; these wild animals are two of the well-known dangers faced by the distressed. Out of the six other mahābhayas, two viz., fire and snake, can easily be discerned in the panels on the right side of the main figure. The remaining four perils can also be recognized in the four panels on the sinister. The central figure, in attributes and her āsana, conforms to the published sādhanā of Āryashtamahābhayā-Tārā. Except for the abhaya-mudrā, the eight miniatures also tally with the prescriptions in the sādhanā. In view of these and of the representations of the mahābhayas, we cannot agree with B. Bhattacharyya when he identifies this image with Khadiravani Tārā and also with Bhattasali as he attributes the image to Śyāma Tārā.

The sādhanā does not prescribe for attending goddesses. However, in this particular image there are two such companions, both seated in the mahārājalila on a double-petalled lotus. The one on the right side of the main figure displays the abhaya-mudrā with her right palm placed near the chest. In her left hand, which is on the knee, is clearly the feather of a peacock. Consequently, she is Mahāmāyuri and not Aśokakāntā as noted by Bhattacharyya. The fierce-looking goddess on the left side of the main figure is no doubt Ekajatā with a corpulent body and with hair rising upwards. In her left and right hands are a skull-cut and a kartri respectively.

Below the lotus-seat of the main figure and on the extreme sinister is the bejewelled Vajrasattva in the paryankāsana, with a thunderbolt in his right hand and a bell in his left. The image on the basis of the palaeography of the short dedicatory inscription at the base. is assignable to the twelfth century A.D.,

Earlier in date, is the fragment of an image of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā of blackish stone, preserved in the museum of the Directorate of Archaeology of West Bengal, Calcutta. Theis fragment hails from Bhandartikuri (District Burdwan, West Bengal). Unfortunately, the lower portion of the sculpture, immediately below the waist of the main figure, is missing the extant height being only 8½ inches. The fragment shows the richly-bejewelled figure of the two-armed Tārā with the stalk of an utpala in her slightly-raised left hand and behind her is an ovalish halo relieved with lotus-petals.

On either side of the main figure are miniature representations of seated Tārā, of which three alone on the sinister are extant. With their right palm in the abhaya-mudrā, they carry the stalk of an utpala in their left hands. Facing them are devotees, [apparently in distress who are in the attitude of invoking the help of the goddess. The top of the arched back slab was most probably relieved with the figures of five Dhyāni-Buddhas, of which the one on the extreme sinister is alone preserved. It represents Amitābha in the dhyāna-mudrā, stylistically, the sculpture is ascribable to the tenth-eleventh century A.D.

There is another fragment [III. 13] of a stone image of Ashtamahābhaya-Tārā in the Archaeological Museum at Nalanda [no. 05648]. Here only the head of the central figure of the three-eyed Tārā is preserved, the remaining portion below the neck is missing. On the dexter of the head are two distressed devotees, one with folded, hands in front of fire and the other (damage) in the clutch of a lion. By the side of both these endangered persons is a figure each of Tārā, seated in the mahārājalila on a viśva-padma. With the stalk of an utpala in her left palm resting on the knee, the goddess extends her right palm, in the abhaya-mudrā, towards the afflicted person. Right above the crown of the main figure is Amoghasiddhi with his right palm (damaged) in the abhaya-mudrā. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the late Pāla period.

Debala Mitra referred to a seated image of Ashṭamahābhaya-Tārā analogous to the one in the Dacca Museum. It is being worshipped as Ugra-Tārā within a modern temple in the village Patana, near Shergarh, District Balasore (Orissa).

The goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a viśva-padma placed above a tri-ratha pedestal. With her right palm in the vara-mudrā, she holds the stalk of an utpala with her left hand, which touches the seat. seated two-armed Miniature figures of Tārā with their right hands in the abhaya-mudrā and the stalk of an utpala in left hands are seen by the sides of the distressed. On the left side (starting from the top] are: (i) two figures attacked by a lion; (ii) two persons endangered by fire; (iii) two figures in the clutch of a brigand; and (iv) two figures about to be drowned. On the right, (from top downwards are: (i) two persons confronted by an elephant; (ii) two persons in front of a snake; (iii) a man in the clutch of a goblin; and (iv) a fettered man. The pedestal of the image is inscribed with the Buddhist creed in characters of the eleventh-twelfthr century A.D. On the pedestal is a pot-bellied figure with hands resting on a śūla, apart from two devotees.

In all these sculptures we find the eight mahābhayas fairly well-represented. The sādhanā, however, is not specific about their actual depiction. Evidently, some images were made after the specification of the sādhanā. In this connexion a reference may be made to a miniature on the manuscript No. Add. 1643 in the library [III. 14] of the Cambridge University. This is labelled as 'Chandradvipe Bhagavati Tārā. 'The bejewelled goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus with her right leg pendant, her right hand in the vara-mudrā and slightly raised left hand holding a blue lotus. There are eight smaller bejewelled figures of Tārā, each in a separate compartment (superimposed one above the other), four being on either side of the main figure. They too hold the blue lotus in their left hands. All the eight figures are seated in the mahārāja-lilā pose and their right hands are in the abhaya-mudrā. there are intended for saving devotees from dangers, is proved not only by the abhaya-mudrā but by the fact that they are not facing the main figure. With their backs turned to the main figure, they are in the attitude of assuring devotees, not represented in the published portion of the miniature. The miniature thus, no doubt, represents Ashṭamahābhaya-Tārā. However, it must be noted that all the nine figures are green in complexion and not in white colour as enjoined in the sādhanā. There might have been another tradition in which the green colour is prescribed. The figure of Amoghasiddhi, who is green in colour is found immediately above the crown of the images of Ashṭamahābhaya-Tārā of Ratnagiri now in the Patna Museum and of the Nalanda Museum.

The above-mentioned manuscript of the Ashṭasāhaśrīka-Prajnāpāramitā in the collection of the Cambridge University Library is copied in A.D. 1015. The miniatures found in this manuscript represent the famous images and shrines of various parts of India and outside. Naturally, the actual images, of which these are painted versions, are of different dates. Thus, in the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to fix the date of the images painted on the manuscript. From the account of Tāranātha, it appears that the first image (stone) of Tārā of Chandradvipa (portions of the Buckergunge District of Bangladesh, according to D.C. Sircar) was established by Chandragomin of (sixth century A.D.). According to Tāranatha, Chandragomin who had been thrown into the Gangā, by the king of Varendra safely landed in the island (later on known as Chandradvipa after Chandragomin) at the mouth of the

Gangā through the grace of Tārā. It is not definitely known if the miniature represents the original image installed by Chandragomin. If it is so, the image which was of Ashṭamahābhaya Tārā belongs to the sixth century A.D.

A partly defaced image in the Nalanda Museum also does not depict the perils. The main figure of Tārā is seated in the lalitāsana on a viśva-padma. With her right palm [damaged] in the vara-mudrā, she holds the stalk of an utpala by her slightly raised left hand. Six of the miniature figures of Tārā are extant, three each on either side of the central figure. The remaining two figures might have been on the top portion of the back slab which is broken. These six miniatures are also seated in the lalitāsana, each on a viśva-padma, with their left palm carrying the stalk of an utpala. All of them face outward with their extended right hand in the abhaya-mudrā.

That Tārā is invoked for deliverance from the eight great perils is also attested by the inscribed stone slab from Dambal, dated A.D. 1095-96, which records certain grants by sixteen śreshthis to the vihāras of Buddha and Tārā. The last verse of this record inscribed round the top of the stone slab is a eulogy of Tārā 'who is anxiously busied with her exercise of tenderness entailed by preserving souls, who are distressed by the fear of water and kings and volumes of fire and wind; who takes away the dread of bold thieves and oceans and elephants and lions and snakes, etc. . . 'Near the top of the slab is a representation of the two-armed seated Tārā, with an utpala in her left hand.

MAHATTARI-TĀRĀ

A notice of this form of Tārā of green complexion occurs in the Indian Buddhist Iconography by Benoytosh Bhattacharya who remarks as follows. 'Mahattari-Tārā may be distinguished by the Vajra-paryankā attitude in which she sits, and also by the fact of her being represented without any companion'. He has illustrated this form with the help of a bronze specimen from Nepal. In this figure we find the goddess seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma. While her right hand displays the vara-mudrā, the slightly-raised left hand holds the stalk of a tiny flower with five or six petals, which does not look like an utpala.

There is only one short sādhanā of this form of Tārā in the Sādhanamālā. No companion goddess is mentioned therein. The relevant portion of the text giving the description of the goddess is given below.

तारां श्यामां द्विभुजां दक्षिणे वरदां वामे सनालेन्दीवरधरां सर्व्वाभरणभूषितां पद्म-चन्द्रासने पर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां चिन्तयेत् । समयमुद्रां बन्धयेत् । हस्तद्वयेन सम्पुटाञ्जलिं कृत्वा तर्ज्जनीद्वयेन मध्यमे

पिधायाङ्गुष्ठाग्रलग्ने विकचोत्पलमुद्रा। ततः ओं तारे तुत्तारें तुरे स्वाहा इति मन्त्रं जपेत् ।[1]

The dhyāna thus conceives a two-armed form of Tārā of green complexion, seated in the paryankāsana on a lotus. With her right hand in the vara-mudrā, the bejewelled goddess holds the stalk of an indivara [blue lotus] in her left hand. The sādhanā appears to be an abridged one. Tārā is invoked in her simplest form and, except for the āsana, there is nothing special. About the merits to be derived out of meditating on this form of Tārā not told.

There are two labelled illustrations of the goddess in the Ashṭasahāśrīka-Prajnāpāramitā manuscript of the Cambridge University Library. The label on one [no. 14] of them is: Varendra-vana-ichcha-Mahāttārāyai. The miniature shows the goddess, in green complexion, seated cross-legged with her right hand in the vara-mudrā, and sightly-raised left hand holding the stalk of a blue lotus.

The label on the second (no. 56) reads Mahāttārāyi Tārā. The representation of Tārā in this miniature is similar to that of the preceding one. However, here she is flanked by two female companions, the one on the dexter being yellow in colour and the other on the sinister being blue. As the miniature has not been illustrated in Foucher's book, it has not been possible for us to examine the iconographic features of the two companion deities. Foucher, however, identified them as Mārīchi and Ekajatī [Ekajatā] this appears to be correct, as we know from the sādhanā of Mahāśri-Tārā that Aśokakāntā (Mārīchi), who sits on the right side of Mahāśrī-Tārā, is yellow in colour and Ekajatā is blue in colour.

There is a third representation of this goddess of Varendra in the Ashṭasahāśrikā-Prajnāpāramitā manuscript of the Asiatic Society library in Calcutta. Here the label is: Varendra vānāyichchha Mahat-Tārā. The goddess is represented in this miniature as green in colour and holding in her slightly raised left hand a blue utpala, the right hand being as usual in the vara-mudrā. However, here the goddess is seated in the lalitāsana with her right leg pendant. There are two companions, blue in colour. The one on the right side is terrible in appearance with rising hair and containing two serpents and holds in the right hand a thunderbolt. The left hand being in the tarjani mudrā. In the right hand of the three-eyed figure on the sinister is a kārtri. While the latter is definitely Ekajatā, the identification of the former is doubtful. Benoytosh Bhattacharya identified this figure with Hayagriva.

From these labelled images it appears that Mahattari-Tārā was also known as Mahāttārāyi, Mahāttārāyi-Tārā and Mahat-Tārā. The first and second closely follow each

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1. Sādhana Mālā, Vol. I, p. 176-77.
2. No. Add. 1643 (dated A.D. 1015).
3. No. A. 15 (dated N.E. 191. i.e. A.D. 1071).

other so far as the colour, attributes and āsana of the principal deity are concerned. However, in the second specimen two companion goddesses are introduced. The third miniature, which is on the manuscript in the library of the Asiatic Society, follows the first and the second specimens only in colour and attributes. Like the second it depicts two companion deities, the dexter one of which is different from the deity on the dexter of the second. The difference, however, is the sitting posture of the main goddess who is shown in the lalitāsana instead of the paryankāsana or vajra-paryankāsana.

The difference in the representation of the sitting posture cannot be attributed to variant dhyānas, as the first (on the Cambridge University Library manuscript) and the third (on the Asiatic Society Library manuscript) speciments, are intended to depict one and the same deity, who was apparently one of the famous divinities of Varendra. Evidently one of the copyists made the mistake. As we know from the colophons of the two manuscripts both the manuscripts were copied in Nepal, the one in the Cambridge University library being dated N E. 135 (A.D. 1015) and the other in the Asiatic Society dated N.E. 191 (A.D. 1071). As the first specimen conforms to the already-quoted sāhanā of Mahattari-Tārā, it is reasonable to conclude that the copyist of the later manuscript, which is in the library of the Asiatic Society, committed the mistake of representing the goddess in the lalitāsana.

From the second painting of this goddess on the manuscript of the Cambridge University Library it appears that Mahattari-Tārā may also be accompanied by Aśokakāntā Mārīchi and Ekajatā, the two favourite companions of Tārā. That Mahattari-Tārā was particularly held sacred in Varendra, is proved not only by the above representations but by the act that the Pāla king Rāmapāla (eleventh-twelfth century A.D.) installed an image of Mahat-Tārā in the mahāvihāra of Jagaddala, founded by him near his capital Rāmāvati. However, the images of this goddess are found in other parts of Eastern India as well.

A good painting of Mahattari-Tārā, occurs on a manuscript of the Ashṭasahāśrīka-Prajnāpāramitā, copied in the year 4 of Rāmapāla. This manuscript is now in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Hindu University, Varanasi. The bejewelled goddess, unattended by any companion, is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana. Her left palm with the stalk of an utpala rests near the chest, while the right palm, in the vara-mudrā, is placed against the knee.

Another painting of this goddess occurs on a manuscript[1] of the Panchavimsasahāśrīkā-Prajnāpāramitā (now in the Baroda Museum) written in the eighth year of the reign of King Harivarman, who belonged to the Yadava dynasty of East Bengal. The goddess in green colour. is depicted within a plain temple of the Bengali hut-type.

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[1] Last quarter of the eleventh century A.D.

Seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a lotus, she exhibits the vara-mudrā with her right palm placed on the knee and carries in her slightly-raised left palm the stalk of a blue utpala.

On this very manuscript another miniature may perhaps be identified as Mahattari-Tārā. On the basis of the already-noted second labelled illustration (no. 56 of Foucher) B. Bhattacharya identifies her with Khadiravāni Tārā. Here the goddess, similar to the preceding in all respects, is flanked by two seated female companions. The one on the dexter is in yellow colour and holds a red flower. She, thus, represents Aśokakāntā-Mārīchi. R.D. Banerji referred to a seated image of Mahattari-Tārā which he had found within the enclosure of the Rameśvara temple at Bauddh town (District Phulbani, Orissa). However, he did not furnish any description of the image. It is, therefore, not possible to verify his identification. He wrongly identified two images of the Indian Museum as Mahattari-Tārā. The images in question depict Tārā in the lalitāsana.

This form of Tārā is at least as old as the sixth century A.D., is proved by the stucco images in Temple 3 at Nalanda. In one panel (III. 5) she is in the role of one of the attending goddesses by the side of a Bodhisattva. Her two hands are, consequently in the anjali-mudrā, while through her left arm-pit passes the stalk of a blue lotus. In two panels at least the sparsely-bejewelled goddess is depicted alone within a niche.In both the panels, the goddess, seated in the paryankāsana, displays the vara-mudrā with her right palm which rests on the knee. While the attribute in the left hand of the image is missing.

Two of the broze images of Mahattari-Tārā from Nalanda, now preserved in the Patna Museum, are seated in the vajra-paryankāsana. While one (no. 8450) has been ascribed to the seventh century A.D. Both of them carry the stalk of an utpala with the left hand, the right palm being in varada Mudrā. A fine representation of this form of Tārā may be seen on an inscribed bronze image from Kurkihar, also in the Patna Museum. With Buddha in the bhumisparśa mudrā above, Avalokiteśvara and Tārā in this image are seated side by side, both in the paryankāsana, on a lotus each (III.16). With her right palm in the vara-mudrā on the knee, the bejewelled Tārā holds the stalk of an utpala with her left palm which rests on the knee. The image may be dated to the ninth-tenth century A.D., on the basis of the inscription recording the Buddhist creed on the back side.

Another specimen of this form of Tārā housed in the Patna Museum is a black stone image (no. 94) hailling from Colgong (District Bhagalpur, Bihar). Here the amply-bejewelled Tārā is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a double-petalled lotus. While her right palm displays the vara-mudrā, the slightly-raised left hand holds the stalk of an utpala. On the dexter is the Aśokakāntā-Mārīchi in the mahārājalīlā pose on a double-petalled lotus, carrying in her left hand the ashoka-branch and in the right a vajra held near the chest. On the sinister is the pot bellied fierce-looking Ekajatā with hair rising upward. Seated in the mahārājalīlā on a double-petalled lotus, she bears a kartri and a kapāla in her right and left hands respectively. The image is ascribable to the late Pāla period.

In the Varendra Research Society Museum (Rajshahi, Bangladesh) there is a two armed image of Tārā, seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma. The image, found at Deopara (District Rajshahi) and ascribable to about the eleventh century A.D., holds in the left hand the stalk of an utpala, and the right palm being in the vara-mudrā. The Indian Museum (Calcutta) possesses a fine image (no. 3820) of Tārā (Ill.17), ascribable to the eighth-ninth century A.D. There is a short dedicatory inscription which also furnishes the name of the goddess. R.D. Banerji reads the name as 'Potalaka Upatara.' However, the word 'Upa' looks like 'Aya' (Ārya'. Like Mahattari-Tārā, she is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma and holds the stalk of an utpala in her left hand, the right hand, with an auspicious mark on the palm, in the vara-mudrā, resting on the knee. She is flanked by two seated female companions. The one on her right is three eyed, with hair rising upward. Of her four hands the upper two hands hold aloft an elephant-skin and the lower right and left hands hold a kartri and a kapāla respectively. She may stand for Ekajatā. The other companion is very graceful in appearance, two-armed and seated in the paryankāsana like Ekajatā. In her left hand is a vajra, and the right hand being varada pose. She may be identified with Aśokakāntā.

Several images of this form of Tārā are found at Ratnagiri District Cuttack, Orissa. In some of the sculptures she is shown in the company of Lokeśvara. Most of them are practically identical. In all these images, with the exception of one, she is unattended by any companion goddess. One of such images is shown on Ill. 18. In this specimen, the elegantly-bejewelled goddess, clothed in a sadi and a chest-cloth, as seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma. With a calm facial expression. she holds the stalk of an utpala with her slightly-raised left palm, the right palm in the vara-mudrā, resting against her knee. Of fine modelling the image is stylisticaliy ascribable to the ninth century A.D.

The other image illustrated here is elaborately fashioned. Draped in a sadi, the richly-bejewelled goddess is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on viśva-padma placed above a footed seat. She carries in her left hand the stalk of a damaged utpala, the right palm with a lotus-mark, in the vara-mudrā, resting on the knee. Over the halo are represented in a row along the top edge of the oblong back-slab five Dhyāni-Buddhas with Lokeśvara on the dexter and Manjughosha on the sinister. Amoghasiddhi occupies the central position, right above the head of Tārā; it is likely, therefore, that this form of Tārā is an emanation of this particular Dhyāni-Buddha.

These are four companion goddesses—Ekajatā, Aśokakāntā, Mahāmāyuri and Ārya-Jānguli, as in the case of Mahāśrī-Tārā and Varada-Tārā. Standing on lotuses, all of them are two-armed. The fierce-looking Ekajatā, with matted hair, a corpulent body, a skull cup in the her left hand, a kartri in her right hand, is on the sinister. Above her is Mahāmāyuri with the feather of a peacock in her left hand. On the dexter is Aśokakāntā with the branch of an aśoka tree in her left hand (the attribute in her right hand damaged). Above her is Ārya-Jānguli with a snake in her left hand, the right hand being in the vara-mudrā. But for the āsana, the image would have corresponded to that of Varada-Tārā, who sits in the ardha-paryankāsana. Stylistically, the image is not earlier than the tenth century A.D.

There is an image from Ratnagiri, where Mahattari-Tārā is seen near the right leg of Lokeśvara. A good specimen of Mahattari-Tārā in bronze (III.21) which is now in the Orissa State Museum at Bhuvaneswar. is found at Achutrajpur, near Banpur District Puri, Orissa. Clothed in a sadi held by a girdle and a scarf worn in an upaviti fashion, the two-armed goddess is decked in valayas, armlets, a necklace, flower-shaped ear-rings and a mukuta with three projections. With a calm face lit by a faint smile, she, with half-closed eyes, is seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma above a footed pedestal. With her right palm displaying the vara-mudrā, she holds the stalk of an utpala with her left palm, the wrist of which rests on her left knee. Around her back is an ovalish halo edged by tongues of flames. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the eleventh century A.D.

We may conclude that at least three forms of Tārā under this name were found. The simplest and also the earliest of them is the one described in the sādhanā, a good number of images of this form were found, of which some go back to the sixth century A.D. In the images of this category both paryankāsana and vajra-paryankāsana are noticeable. In her second form Mahattari-Tārā is accompanied by two companions, generally Aśokakāntā and Ekajatā. Her third form is most elaborate, here she has four companions.

SIMHANĀDA-TĀRĀ

In the book entitled the Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism A.K. Gordon has noticed a special form of Tārā called Simhanāda Tārā. Green in colour, Tārā in this aspect is endowed with a single head and two arms and is seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus-throne supported by a roaring lion. Her mudrās are varada and vitarka, while the symbol is an utpala at the left shoulder or at both the shoulders. Getty also refers to this form of Tārā and has published a Tibetan image. In this image we find the two armed bejewelled goddess with a placid facial expression seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus on the back of a standing roaring lion. With the stalk of an utpala in her left palm placed near the chest, she displays the vara-mudrā with her right palm resting on the knee.

Surprising by the Sādhanamālā does not contain any sādhanā devoted to this form of Tārā. Nor does this form find mention in this text even as a companion goddess. The Nishpannayogāvali is also silent about this aspect of the goddess. The attributes-vara-mudrā and utpala are no doubt enjoined in most of the other forms of Tārā but the lion is not associated with her.

There may be a sādhanā, though not published, conceiving this form of Tārā, a counterpart of Simhanāda, i.e. a popular form of Avalokiteśvara. We are led to presume this from a stone image (no. 337 E) of Tārā (III 22) unearthed at Sarnath and ascribable to the ninth century A.D. Its semi circular back-slab is inscribed with the Buddhist creed, and the base with a short dedicatory record. Of fine modelling, the image is elegantly bejewelled. With a placid and benign facial expression and half-closed eyes, the goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a viśva-padma, her pendant left foot lightly touching a kneeling lion; the latter with a roaring face is looking up towards the goddess. Her right palm, exhibiting the vara-mudrā, is placed against the knee, while the left palm, raised to the level of the chest, holds the stalk of an utpala. However, on the dexter of the head is a figure of Amitābha in the dhyāna-mudrā and the vajra-paryankāsana on a lotus.

This image is very interesting for two reasons. First, it indicates the existence of a sādhanā, hitherto unpublished. Secondly, it illustrates a rare form of Tārā with the lion as a mount. This animal, as is well-known, is the mount of Durgā from very early times. Another image (III. 3) of this form of Tārā lies at Bhuinpara, near Shergarh (District Balasore). The goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a viśva-padma with her left hand carrying the stalk of an utpala. The right palm is raised to the level of the chest. Below the lotus-seat is a lion with open mouth. The back side of the image is inscribed with the Buddhist creed in the characters of the tenth-eleventh century A.D.

(iv) DURGOTTĀRINI-TĀRĀ

Durgottārini Tārā has green complexion, the lotus for her seat, and garments of white colour; she has four arms and she carries in the first pair of hands, the noose and the goad and displays in the second the lotus and the Varada mudrā.' No image of this goddess has been illustrated by B. Bhattacharya.

The single dhyāna given in the Sādhanamālā describes the goddess in the following terms.

एतां भगवतीं दुर्गोत्तारिणीतारां मुहुः श्यामां चतुर्भुजां वामेन पाशं दक्षिणेनाङ्कुशधारिणीं

भक्तमाश्वासयन्तीं दक्षिणेन वरदां दिव्यमालाम्बरधारिणीं वामेन नीलोत्पलहस्तां सितवस्त्रप्रावृतदेहां पद्मासनस्थां त्रिकालं ध्यायेत् ।[1]

This sādhanā does not specify any particular āsana. She may, thus, be represented in any attitude, whether seated or standing. The dhyāna also does not refer to any Dhyāni-Buddha. On the other hand, homage is paid to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who is called mahākārunika and mahāsattva along with Durgottārini, called Mahāyogeśvarī. She is invoked for removing all troubles, sorrow and imprisonment. By utterances of her mantras, devotees are relieved of fetters, whether by chains, or by a noose or by grahas.

With the help of the dhyāna, the attributes in her hands can be explained. She assures the devotees (bhaktamāsvāsayantim dakshinena varadām) and imparts boon (ishṭam varam yāchitamekameva māsena dadyāt), one of her hands is in the vara-mudrā. The noose signifies the bandhana (bond, fetters) from which devotees are relieved by her. The significance of the elephant-goad, according to the Vishnudharmottara-purāṇa, is sarvabhūtavaśankari ājnā (command subjugating all beings). At the command of the goddess people let loose her fettered devotees. She also releases people from the bondage of the world (samsāra-bandhana). The blue utpala is her symbol par excellence.

The name Durgottārini is evidently inspired by the name of the Brahmanical goddess Durgā, a great protectress, who removes all kinds of difficulties and distress (durgāpahārini). The name Durgā is explained in the Mahābhārata in the following words:

दुर्गोत्तारयसे दुर्गे तत्त्वं दुर्गा स्मृता जनैः ।[2]

'People call you Durgā, as you rescue people from difficult passage (durgā).'

The Buddhists adopted the name for Tārā, who might rival the great Brahmanical goddess and bring more people of Brahmanical faith into the fold of Buddhism. Most of the attributes in the hands of Durgottārini-Tārā are found in the hands of Hindu Devī and her various aspects as well. Thus, Pārvatī the common form of Devī, as the consort of Śiva, according to the Uttara-Kāmikāgama, is one-faced, three-eyed and four-armed. With a benign countenance, she carries a noose and an elephant-goad, the remaining two hands displaying the varada-mudrā and abhaya-mudrā. The Nandā, in the Vishnudharmottara Purāṇa bears in her four hands vara, a noose, an elephant-goad and an abja and is seated on an elephant. Tripurā, an aspect of Gauri, according to the Rūpamandana, holds in two of her hands a nāga-pāsa and an elephant-goad, the other palms being varadā and abhayadā. Bhairavi, in the Viśvakarmā-śāstra, carries a noose and an elephant-goad. Again, a form of Annapūrnā, according to the Karanāgama, bears vara, abhaya, a noose and an elephant-goad.

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[1] Sādhanāmālā, Vol. I, p. 237.

[2] Mbh.

Identical attributes for the three-eyed Bhuvaneśvari (Bhuvaneśi) are enjoined in the Mahālakshmi-ratna-kośa.

She is also known as Durgot-Tārā. This is evident from the Mainamati copper plate of Ranavankamalla Harikaladeva, which records a grant of land in favour of a vihāra dedicated to the goddess Durgot-Tārā in the town of Pattikera (District Comilla, Bangladesh). The copper-plate is dated Saka 1141 (A.D. 1220). There was a shrine where Durgot-Tārā had been under worship at Mainamati up to thirteenth century A.D. An image of this deity is now in the Indian Museum[1], Calcutta. R.P. Chanda found this image from Kendrapara (District Cuttack, Orissa), the original find-spot according to him, being Lalitagiri or Nalatigiri (District Cuttack). He did not give a detailed description of the image which was noted as 'four-armed Tārā' seated at ease with the right leg hanging down the lotus seat ('4" by 3') from Nalatigiri.' The same image has been illustrated as Tārā by R.D. Banerji in his History of Orissa. N.K. Sahu has correctly identified it with Durgottārini-Tārā.

All the attributes in her four hands conform precisely to those prescribed in the sādhanā. In her upper left and right hands are respectively a noose and an elephant-goad. Her lower left hand holding the stalk of an utpala rests on the lotus-seat, the corresponding right hand being in the vara-mudrā. Dressed in a sadi and un upper garment, the richly-bejewelled goddess, with half-closed eyes and calm expression, is seated in the lalitāsana on a fully-blossomed double-petalled lotus.

She does not bear the figure of any Dhyāni-Buddha. However, at the top corners of the back-slab are depicted two Dhyāni-Buddhas-flanking the elongated oval halo of the goddess. The one on the dexter is Akshobhya in the bhumisparśa-mudrā, while the other is Amitābha in the dhyāna-mudrā. Immediately below Akshobhya is a two-armed figure of Mahattari-Tārā in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma with her right palm in the vara-mudrā and left holding the stalk of utpala. The figure below Amitābha represents the four-armed Bhṛkuti, seated also in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma. Berefit of ornaments and with jatā, she holds in her upper left and right hands a tridandaka and a rosary. Her lower right palm displays the vara-mudrā. The object in her lower left palm which rests on the knee is perhaps a water-pot. There is a stupa on her jatā-mukuta.

On the extreme sinister, below the lotus-seat, is a somewhat fierce-looking six-armed bejewelled female, standing in the pratyālidha pose with her right leg slightly bent and left outstretched. Her principal right hand holds a daṇḍa tipped by a skull and the middle is perhaps in the act of bowing. Her lowest left hand is in the tarjani mudrā near the chest. The object in her middle left hand is indistinct. Above her head is an elephant-skin held by the two uppermost hands. Durgā in her Mahishāsuramardini aspect kills the buffalo-demon. Here we find the attendant of Durgottārini-Tārā holding the elephant-skin like the

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[1] new no. A 24130.

Gajāsura samhāra-mūrti of Śiva. The image is inscribed with the Buddhist creed in characters of the tenth century A.D. An image, of the same period, of Durgottārini-Tārā lies at Ratnagiri (District Cuttack). Her left hand, with the stalk of an utpala, rests on her thigh, the corresponding right being in the vara-mudrā. The upper left and right hands carry respectively a noose and an elephant-goad. Here, however, the three-eyed goddess is standing with a slight flexion. She is absolutely unattended.

No image earlier than the ninth century A.D., is found and under this name. It is not possible to state if this form was conceived in the ninth century or earlier. Tārā used to receive homage as late as the thirteenth century A.D., is proved by the already-noted Mainamati copper plate. While the standing image from Ratnagiri in unfinished state conforms to the sādhanā practically in all respects, the accompanying figures in the seated image from Kendrapara are not enjoined in the sādhanā. As both the available images are of stone (khondalite), it has not been possible to verify the colour of the goddess who according to the sādhanā, is green in complexion.

This form of Tārā is known in the countries outside India as well. The sixth side chapel of the Pao-hsiang Lou at Peking contains a Tibeto-Chinese bronze image of Durgottārini-Tārā. Clad in a sāḍi, the figure is single-headed, four-armed and two-eyed. With a placid and benign facial expression, she is decorated with various ornaments. She is seated in the paryankāsana on a lotus. Her principal right palm, displaying the vara-mudrā, rests on the knee; the corresponding left palm holds the stalk of an utpala. In the other left hand is a noose. The object in the right hand is a staff crowned by a viśva-vajra. The hook of the ankuśa is not visible in the photograph. One representation of the goddess occurs in a manuscript entitled *Chu Fo pusa Sheng Hsiang Tsan* which is in the National Library of Peking. Here too, the single-headed, four-armed and two-eyed goddess is seated in the paryankāsana. The object in her upper right hand is, however, the long stalk of a lotus, above which are indistinct projections, the remaining attributes being the vara-mudrā, noose and utpala, the last two in the left hands. The facial expression is placid in this representation.

MAHĀŚRI-TĀRĀ

There is a single sādhanā (no. 116) devoted to Mahāśri-Tārā in the Sādhanamālā. It describes her form as follows:

महाश्रीतारां चन्द्रासनस्थां श्यामवर्णां द्विभुजां हस्तद्वयेन व्याख्यानमुद्राधरां एकवक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कार-भूषितां पार्श्वद्वयेनोत्पलशोभां सुवर्णसिंहासनोपरि अपाश्रयादिशोभां नानापुष्पाशोकचम्पक-नागेश्वर-पारिजातकादिभीराजिताममोघसिद्धिमुकुटिनीम् ।

महाश्रीतारायाः पार्श्वे एकजटामर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कोपविष्टां नीलवर्णां कर्त्रिकपालधरां सक्रोधां लम्बोदरां पिङ्गलजटाविभूषितां व्याघ्रचर्म्माम्बरधरां दक्षिणे पार्श्वे अशोककान्तां पीतवर्णां रत्नमुकुटिनीं वज्राशोकधराम्, पुनर्वामे आर्य्यजाङ्गुलीं श्यामवर्णां सर्पवरदहस्ताम्, दक्षिणे महामायूरीं मयूरपिच्छवरदहस्ताम् । भावनावसानसमये उत्पलमुद्रां बन्धयेत ।[1]

The sādhanā of Mahāśri-Tārā is found in two of the eight manuscripts consulted by B. Bhattacharya while editing the Sādhanamālā. In MS. B[2] the word lalitāsthitā occurs in place of the rājalilāsthitā. The characteristic features of Mahāśri-Tārā as conceived in the above sādhanā are following. Green in complexion, the single-faced goddess, adorned with ornaments, has two hands exhibiting the vyākhyāna-mudrā. Her two sides adorned by utpalas. With various flowers or flowering trees around her, she sits in the rājalilāsana (sitting pose of princely ease) or lalitāsana on a golden throne and bears on her crown a figure of Amoghasiddhi.

The goddess Mahāśri-Tārā is attended by four goddesses. The two on her left side are Ekajatā and Ārya-Jānguli, while the other two on the right are Aśokakāntā and Mahāmāyuri. All are two-armed and seated in the ardha-paryankāsana. The fierce-looking Ekajatā, blue in colour, holds a kartri (curved knife) and a skull-cup. With a protruding belly, she, with tawny matted hair, wears a tiger-skin. Ārya-Jānguli, of green complexion, displays the vara-mudrā and holds a snake. Aśokakāntā is of yellow colour with a bejewelled crown and a thunderbolt and an aśoka flower or branch in her hands. With her right hand in the vara-mudrā, Mahāmāyuri carries the feather of a peacock. The name Jānguli is, presumably, derived from jangala (forest). It is not unlikely that she was a folk divinity incorporated by the Buddhists into their pantheon.

The compassionate goddess bestows wealth (dhana) on those who invoke Tārā in this form. The name of the goddess means 'Tārā of great (Mahā) beauty, splendour, merit and prosperity.' The vyākhyāna-mudrā, i.e. the gesture of argumentation, deliberation on the doctrine and the exposition of the dharma, is rather unusual for Tārā. In fact, Mahāśri is the only form of Tārā who is enjoined to exhibit the vyākhyāna-mudrā in the Sādhanamālā. Śri is the well-known name of Lakṣhmi, the beautiful goddess of prosperity and good fortune. Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, is also called Śri, as may be presumed from the name of Śri-panchami which is the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Magha on which the religious festival in honour of Sarasvati is held every year and when books and materials for writing are to be worshipped. In this connexion a reference may be made to a mudrā called kichijo-in (in Japanese) which is a gesture of good fortune. This mudrā is stated to be a variant of the an-i-in, the form which corresponds to the Indian vitarka-mudrā and vyākhyāna-mudrā. The kichijo-in (Sanskrit Śri-mudrā) is formed by the joining of the thumb and the ring finger, the other fingers of the raised palm (outward) being straight. This 'mudrā, is characteristic of the goddess Kichijo-ten, who grants to the faithful devotees the good fortune that the goddess symbolizes. The Daishoen'okusho (15) notes that "by kudoku is meant Kichijo tennyo. In Sanskrit she is called Mahāśri (makashiri). Mahā means great. Śri has two meanings: merit (kudoku) and good fortune (kichijo)." When this mudrā is shown on statues of Shākyamuni, it is called kichijo-in, the mudrā of good fortune or of joy, because by it the world, to which the Buddha explains his Law, rejoices.'

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[1] Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 244.

[2] dated N.S. 285=A.D. 1165.

These images of Mahāśri-Tārā sometimes pose a problem, as these rëseṁble the two-armed Prajnāpāramitā. The vyākhyāna-mudrā, is also the mudrā of Prajnāpāramitā. It is generally held that in the images of Prajnāpāramitā there is a book on a lotus on one side or on two sides of the goddess. However, the two miniatures on two manuscripts of the Ashṭasāhasrikā-Prajnāpāramitā[1] leave no room for doubt that the images of Prajnāpāramitā are sometimes represented without the depiction of books. These two particular miniatures represent the same deity, namely, Prajnāpāramitā of the Gridhrakuta hill (at Rajgir, District Nalanda), as may be gathered from the labels. The miniature on Add. 1643 depicts the goddess in the vyākhyāna-mudrā with the stalk of two red lotuses passing through her arm-pits.

However, on a close scrutiny of the images of Prajnāpāramitā it appears that the red lotus and not utpala, is associated with her, whereas the utpala is the characteristic symbol of Mahāśri-Tārā, in fact, nearly of all forms of Tārā. Only two manuscripts, out of the eight consulted by B. Bhattacharya in his edition of the Sādhanamālā, contain the sādhanā of Mahāśri-Tārā. This means that the name of Mahāśri was not widely prevalent.

The goddess[2] is depicted on one end of the panel. There are five companion goddesses, the two below being blue and yellow in colour and three above being yellow, green and white. Out of these, the two near the base may be identified with the blue Ekajatā and the yellow Aśoka-kāntā. The miniature has been labelled as 'Potālake Bhagavati Tārā.' Tārānātha also refers to the preaching Tārā at the foot of the Potala hill in the course of his account of the visit of Buddhaśānti and Buddhaguhya to the Potala hill during the period of King Dharmapāla of the Pāla dynasty. When these two āchāryas went to the Potala hill, the seated Tārā was preaching the Doctrine to the Nāgas.

A representation of this very goddess, also called as 'Potālake Bhagavati Tārā, occurs on one manuscript[3]. Here also, the goddess, green in colour, is shown at one end of the panel.

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1. no. Add. 1643 of the Cambridge University Library and no. A.15 of the Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta.
2. No. 16 (of Foucher) of the manuscript no. 1643 in the Cambridge University Library.
3. No. A.15 in the library of the Asiatic Society.

She is seated on a cushion over a lotus, placed above a throne with a back-rest below an aśoka tree. Her left foot is pendant, while her folded right leg is placed across her left thigh. Her two palms, in the vyākhyāna mudrā, are near the chest, while through her left arm-pit passes the stalk of a blue utpala. Bhattacharya has identified the goddess with Mahāśri-Tārā. In front of Tārā, there are eight companion goddesses, variantly blue, yellow, pinkish, red, white, blue, yellow and blue in colour. The two on the foreground represent the three eyed fierce-looking Ekajatā, blue in complexion and holding a curved knife in her right hand. The three-eyed Aśokakāntā, seated in the paryankāsana, yellow in colour, carrying a branch with aśoka flowers. The remaining six do not bear any attributes. While four of them have their hands in the anjali-mudrā, the hands of two are not depicted at all. In the absence of any characteristic attributes it is difficult to agree with the view of Bhattacharya that the two seated figures behind Aśokakāntā represent Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri. The colour also does not conform to the colour prescribed in the Sādhanamālā for these two deities. Bhattacharya's suggestion that the remaining four deities represent the first four syllables of the Tārā-mantra, is obviously not convincing.

[1]There occurs another miniature showing the two-armed bejewelled goddess in the vyākhyāna-mudrā (dharmachakra-mudrā) with the stalk of a blue utpala passing through her left arm-pit. It is labelled as 'Khadiravani Tārā Bhattārika.' Here the goddess, green in complexion, is seated on a throne with her folded right leg partly placed on the left thigh, Above the throne, is a luxuriant foliage. She depicted in the centre of the panel, is flanked on either side by a group of five figures. Of the five figures on the dexter, one of yellow complexion and three-eyed, presumably represents Aśokakāntā with a thunderbolt in her right hand. The four standing figures behind her are variantly white, red, yellow and green. The one immediately behind Aśokakāntā appears to be male; his right hand is in the vyākhyāna-mudrā. Of the remaining three figures the heads alone are visible. Of the five figures on the sinister of Tārā, the seated one, of terrible appearance and blue complexion, holding a kartri and a skull is Ekajatā; with a corpulent body, the angry-looking goddess is three-eyed. Behind her are four standing figures, variantly yellow, red, yellow and green. A miniature, exactly similar to the preceding, occurs on a manuscript[2] of the Ashṭasāhaśrikā-Prajnāpāramitā.

All these miniatures noted above, show the following characteristics of Tārā. All of them, are green in colour, one-faced and two-armed. The hands are somewhat similar to the dharmachakra-mudrā. Through their left arm-pit passes the stalk of a blue utpala. The sitting-posture of three of them, is not generally met with in the case of the images of female Buddhist deities. In the representation of the lalitāsana, normally, one of the legs rests on the seat, the other being pendant. In the mahārājalilā as found in some of the images of male Buddhist deities, both the legs are on the seat, one knee being raised. In the case of these miniatures we find one leg, folded, resting partly on the other leg, which is either pendant or stretched at a lower level. According to the sādhanā, Mahāśri-Tārā should be conceived as seated either in the

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1. On the same manuscript of the library of the Asiatic Society.
2. In the collection of S.K. Saraswati.

rājalilā or in the lalitāsana. In all the miniatures, Tārā is invariably accompanied by Ekajatā and Aśokakāntā, Ārya-Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri, as required in the already-quoted sādhanā.

Only one stone image of this goddess from Eastern India has been identified so far. It is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Bhattacharya has already illustrated it in his Indian Buddhist Iconography[1] The richly-ornamented deity displays dharmachakra-mudrā with her hands. Through her left arm-pit passes an utpala. On her right side is a rearing stalk with a lotus at the top. She is seated on a fully-blossomed lotus with her pendant right foot perched on a small lotus and left foot on her right thigh. According to Bhattacharya, she 'bears on her crown the miniature figure of Amoghasiddhi,' which is not the case here. The crown does not bear any figure. However, above the head is a luxuriant foliage, around which are arrayed the five Dhyāni-Buddhas, one in the centre, being Amoghasiddhi in the abhaya-mudrā. Starting from the dexter and moving clockwise, the Dhyāni-Buddhas are Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Akshobhya and Amitābha respectively.

Tārā in this image according to Bhaṭtacharya, is flanked by the four companion goddesses—Ekajatā, Aśokakāntā-Mārichi, Ārya-Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri—as enjoined in the sādhanā. However, we find only the first two of these goddesses. The three-eyed, angry-looking Ekajatā with rising hair and protruding belly is seated in the mahārājalilā on a lotus to the left of the goddess. She carries in her right and left hands a kartri and a kapāla respectively. On the corresponding right is the peaceful Aśokakāntā, possibly with a thunderbolt in her right hand and an aśoka-twig in her left, seated also in the mahārājalilā on a lotus. Below the lotus-seat and within the foils of the lotus-stem these are three devotees with folded hands.

This stone image and also the miniatures, referred to above, do not contain the figures of Ārya-Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri as required in the available sādhanā of Mahāśri-Tārā. Presumably, there was a variant sādhanā conforming to these depictions. The image in the Indian Museum has a dedicatory inscription. From the palaeographic evidence of this record, the image is assigned to the twelfth century A.D. That the conception of this form of Tārā is much older is proved by the miniature on the manuscript of the Cambridge University Library, copied in A.D. 1015. If Tārānāth's account regarding the preaching Tārā at the foot of the Potala hill is based on facts, the conception of Mahāśri-Tārā goes back at least to the ninth century A.D.

Another two-armed stone image of Mahāśri-Tārā, ascribable to about the twelfth century A.D., has been unearthed at Antichak (District Bhagalpur, Bihar). The image was displayed[2] in the National Museum, New Delhi. From the available part of the arms it is certain that the palms were near the chest in the vyākhyāna-mudrā. The stalk of an utpala passes over her left arm, while there is a lotus with a thick stem on the dexter. The goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on the pericarp of a double-petalled lotus with an elaborate stem. Her pendant right foot is perched on an utpala, while the left foot rests on the right thigh. The lotus-seat is supported by two nāgas. Clad in a decorated sāḍi and a scarf, the goddess is amply bejewelled and wears an oblong vertical mark on the fore-head. On her either side is female companion, both seated in the mahārājalilā on lotuses with stalks issuing from the central stem. The companion on the dexter is Aśokakāntā holding in her right hand the thunderbolt and in the left hand the aśoka-branch. The companion on the sinister is the pot-bellied Ekajatā with the kartri and the kapāla in her right and left hands respectively; she is somewhat fierce-looking. Above the head of the goddess and spread at the arched upper part of the back-slab which is pointed at the crown are five Tathāgatas, all seated in the vajra-paryankāsana on double-petalled lotuses. Starting from the dexter are Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi (right above the head of Tārā). Akshobhya and Amitābha. With a moulded border, the back-slab is edged by tongues of flames. The central portion of the pancha-ratha pedestal below the stem of the lotus-seat bears a dedicatory inscription and the Buddhist creed.

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[1] p. 229 and fig. 169.

[2] In an exhibition held in 1976.

Pratapaditya Pal has brought to our notice two bronze images of Mahāśri-Tārā, one in the collection of S.K. Saraswati and the other in that of Bratindra Nath Mukherjee. From the iconographical and sculptural points of view both are stated to be identical and resemble the stone image in the Indian Museum in form and style. Pal thinks that the bronzes are not only of the Pāla period but of East Indian workmanship, though they were found in Nepal.

Both the bronzes show the elaborately-bejewelled goddess seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus, with her pendant right leg on a smaller lotus. The two hands are in the dharmachakra-mudrā. On the left side of the goddess is an utpala, while on the right is an ordinary lotus. Being metal images, the accessory divinities in each case must have originally been placed on the throne pedestal which however is, unfortunately, lost. In any case, the only other goddess in the Mahāyāna pantheon, who could possibly be identified, is Prajnāpāramitā. But, necessarily, Prajnāpāramitā must have a manuscript either in one of her hands or placed on a lotus at the side, which definitely does not occur in the present images. The fundamental agreement of the goddess represented in each of the images with the description of Mahāśri-Tārā in the Sādhanamālā leaves no doubt about the identification.'

The images of Prajnāpāramitā need not necessarily have a manuscript either in her hand or on a lotus by her side. However, we agree with the identification of Pal in view of the fact that an utpala, the distinguishing mark of Tārā, occurs on the left side of the Goddess. The inference of Pal regarding the companion deities existing on the throne which was not found may be correct. Even if these deities were not there, the images which essentially agree with the sādhanā of the main deity may be identified with Mahāśri-Tārā. A perusal of the Sādhanamālā would convince any one that sometimes a deity has several sādhanās, both long and abridged, dedicated to her or him. The presence or absence of companion goddesses cannot always be regarded as a decisive criterion. As we have seen that none of the images, whether in stone or in painting, considered here, contain the figures of Ārya-Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri who along with Ekajatā and Aśokakāntā are required to accompany Mahāśri-Tārā according to the sādhanā. We have also noticed that the image of Ashṭamahābhayā-Tārā in the Daccā Museum shows the figure of Ekajaṭā and Mahāmāyuri, though they are not mentioned in the available sādhanā of Aṣṭamahābhaya-Tārā.

These two images along with some other bronze icons were found in an earthen pot at Jaipurgarh Fatehpur Block, District Gaya, Bihar. Both the images are analogous and ascribable to the eleventh-twelfth century A.D. The photograph of one, labelled as Tārā of the images was published in the Hindi Daily Āj. The two armed goddess in these two bronze images is seated in the lalitāsana on the pericarp of a viśva-padma resting on a moulded and beaded base. While her right foot rests on a flower issuing from the base, the left foot is placed on her right thigh. Elaborately bejewelled and a vertical oblong mark on the forehead, the goddess displays the vyākhyāna-mudrā with her two palms placed near the chest, encircling her left fore-arm is the stalk of an utpala. On the dexter is a lotus with a long stalk.

A painting, evidently representing Mahāśri-Tārā, on the inner face of a wall of the corridor of the Abeyadana temple, Myinpagan village, near Pagan, Burma. This temple is said to have been built during the reign of Kyanzittha (A.D. 1084-1142). The panels of this temple are significant in view of the fact that they represent Mahāyāna and Tantric deities, which are rather rare in Burma, essentially a Hinayāna country. The particular panel depicts the bejewelled goddess seated in the lalitāsana, with her left leg pendant, on a full-blown lotus. Her hands are in the dharmachakra-mudrā. An utpala, the stalk of which passes through her right arm-pit, is seen above her right soulder. The goddess is unattended by any companions.

ĀRYA KHADIRAVĀNI-TĀRĀ

There single sādhanā devoted to this form of Tārā in the Sādhanamālā is quoted below: The dhyāna, thus, conceives the goddess as green in complexion and two-armed. Displaying the vara-mudrā with her right palm, she carries an utpala with her lelf hand. Flanked by Aśokakāntā-Mārichi on the right and Ekajatā on the left, she bears on her crown the figure of Amoghasiddhi.

हरिताममोघसिद्धिमुकुटीं वरदोत्पलधारिदक्षिणवामकरां अशोककान्तामारीच्येकजटाव्यग्र दक्षिणवामदिग्भागां दिव्यकुमारीमलङ्कारवतीं ध्यात्वा ज्ञानसत्त्वेन सहैकीकृत्य ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा इति मन्त्रं जप्त्वा तन्मनसैव यथेष्टं विहरेत् ।[1]

She may, be represented in any posture, whether standing or seated. The features of the goddess are common to several forms of Tārā. This factor together with the lack of any specific āsana gives rise to the possibility of confusing the unlabelled images of the goddess with those of Vasyādhikāra-Tārā, Mahattari-Tārā and Varada-Tārā with identical colour and attributes. The only distinguishing feature is that Khadiravāni is attended by two companion goddesses. According to the published sādhanās, Vasyādhikāra-Tārā seated in the bhadrāsana) and Mahattari-Tārā (characterized by the paryankāsana) should be unattended, while Varada-Tārā (characterized by the ardha-paryankāsana) should have four attending goddesses viz. Aśokakāntā, Ekajatā, Ārya-Jānguli and Mahāmāyuri. However, one of the labelled miniatures of the manuscript no. Add. 1643 of the Cambridge University Library depicts Mahattari-Tārā in the company of Aśokakāntā-Mārichi and Ekajatā. On the other hand, some of the labelled representations of Khadiravāṇi found in northern Buddhist countries depict the goddess alone, unattended by companions. We may, for practical purposes, ascribe Khadiravāni to those images which are not in the paryanka or vaira-paryanka attitude and which are attended by Aśokakāntā-Marichi and Ekajatā.

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[1] Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 176.

The features, colour and attributes in the hands of Aśokakāntā-Mārichi and Ekajaṭā are not detailed in the sādhanā of Khadiravāni-Tārā. The traits of these attending deities, however, are described in the sādhanā of Varada-Tarā. Here the two armed Aśokakāntā is noted as yellow in complexion and wearing a mukuta with various jewels. In her right and left hands are thunderbolt and the bud of an aśoka tree (aśoka-pallava). Ekajatā is conceived as fierce-looking with dreadful teeth displayed and flaming tawny hair rising upwards, Dwarfish in appearance and dark blue or black in complexion, she is three-eyed and wears a tiger-skin. She carries a skull-cup. The description of these two companion goddesses in the sādhanā of Mahāśri-Tārā is practically the same as in the sādhanā of Varada-Tārā. The blue-coloured Ekajatā is noted as pot-bellied and wearing tawny matted hair. In her independent sādhanās also, Aśokakāntā-Mārichi is yellow in complexion and carries in her left hand the twig of an aśoka tree. The right hand, however, displays the vara-mudrā instead of holding a thunder-bolt. As a companion of the eight-armed Kurukullā, the fierce-looking blue-coloured Ekajatā has four arms holding a thunderbolt, an elephant-goad, a bell and a noose. There are several independent sādhanās[1] of Ekajatā devoted to her various forms. One of them is twelve-headed and twenty-four-armed and is known by a distinct appellation, Vidyujjvālākarāli. In her two-armed form, Ekajaṭā carries a kartri and a skull-cup. In one variety of the four-armed aspect the attributes are a kartri and a sword (or a rosary) in right hands and a skull-cup and an utpala in left hands. This form closely conforms to the dhyāna of Mahāchina-Tārā. In the other variety she holds a sword (or a conch shell) and an arrow in right hands and a skull-cup and a bow in left hands. When eight-armed, she carries a sword, an arrow, a thunder bolt and a kartri in right hands and an utpala, a bow, a paraśu and a skull-cup in her left hands. All these forms, according to Sādhanā, are single-headed, three-eyed, terrible-looking, dwarfish, pot-bellied, blue or black-coloured, wearing tiger-skin, in the pratyālidha attitude on corpses and bearing Akshobhya on the crown. There is a white form of this fierce-looking goddess, also in the pratyālidha posture. In this complexion, the goddess has two hands, the right hand bearing a rosary and the left holding a nilotpala-kalikā.

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1. Nos. 123, 124, 125, 126 and 127.

Khadiravāni-Tārā is conceived in the sādhanā, as green in complexion. We, therefore, cannot agree to A. Getty as she states that Khadiravāni is a form of the yellow Tārā.' According to her, this form of the goddess is represented as seated in the lalitāsana; the right foot however, hangs unsupported by any lotus. The right hand, in the vara-mudrā, holds the stalk of a full-blown lotus, while the left, in the vitarka-mudrā, carries the stalk of an utpala. Mārichi and Ekajaṭā may accompany her. Gordon's description of the goddess is more or less on the lines of A. Getty. She, however has classified the goddess under the green Tārā, though she has not connected śokakāntā and Ekajaṭā with Khadiravāni. She, too, has noted the goddess as seated in the lalitāsana. The representations of the goddess in the manuscript of the Chu Fo Pu-sa Sheng Hsiang Tsan and in the Pantheon of 300 figures composed by the Chang Chia Hutuktu Lalitāvajra are in the lalitāsana with right foot unsupported. The same sitting posture is exhibited by the figure illustrated by Lokesh Chandra.

According to Waddell, however, the single-headed and two armed goddess, decked in jewels and silk, holds a blue utpala by the stalk with her right hand, displaying the vara-mudrā, the left hand being in 'the three-holy-oneś-pointed-figure' attitude. Of green complexion the Goddess stands with her right leg slightly extended. She is flanked on her right side by Mārichi, yellow in complexion and bearing a thunderbolt and the branch of an aśoka tree. The companion on her left is Ral-gchig-ma (Ekajaṭā), black in colour and dressed like a krodha fiend. She carries a curved knife and skull-bowl.

The Khadiravāni-Tārā is generally represented in the lalitāsana and sometimes in a standing posture. B. Bhattacharyya, accepted the reading of the name as Khadiravāni-Tārā, as Tārā of the forest (vana of khadiras). However, this interpretation is commonly held and is partly supported by the Tibetan meaning (green Tārā) of the Sandal forest as furnished by L.A. Waddell. If, on the other hand, the name was originally intended as Khadiravāni the meaning would naturally be Tārā of the colour of the Khadira.

The manuscripts, consulted by Bhattacharya while editing the Sādhanamālā, furnish the name as Khadira-Tārā and Khadiravāni (in MS. 'A', also in the collection of the Asiatic Society). The latter name fits in with the generally-accepted meaning the name (i e. Tārā of the Khadira forest). This is also in agreement with the appellation Khadira vasini-Tārā as emended by D.C. Sircar from Khadiravāni-Tārā occurring in a manuscript of the Trikāṇḍaśesha.

Khadiravāna or Khairavāna might have also been the name of a locality which had originally a wood of the Khadiras. Many place-names in India are after the names of trees (e.g. Piprahwa). Long back Foucher stated that Khairavāna recalls Khadiravāna mentioned in the label of one of the miniatures of the manuscript no. Add. 1943 of the Cambridge University Library. This particular label, relating to a painting of Lokanātha, reads Chandrāpura-Konkane Shri-Khairavane Lokanāthah.

Khairavana is, presumably, the name of a locality in Chandrāpura-Konkan. The word sri prefixed to Khairavana would indicate that the place was held particularly sacred by the

Buddhists. Whether this Khairavana in Chandrātura-Ḳonḳana is identical with Khadiravana after which this particular form of Tārā became famous, is not definitely known. Though Khairavana can easily be the popular of Khadiravana, Konkana is the modern Konkana on the western coast of India. The addition of the word Chandrātura to Konkana would lead one to presume that the territory is other than Konkan proper.

In this connexion we may discuss in details the label of another miniature illustrated in the above-mentioned manuscript. Foucher in his notice of the painting read the label as Kodgomandale Khydiravani (ne) Tārā and suggested an identification of Kodgo with the modern Coorg in Karnataka. However, on a careful scrutiny of the label it appears that the reading Kodgo is not correct. The reading of this particular word is certainly Kongo. Foucher himself read an identical conjunct letter correctly in the label of another miniature of the same manuscript. Kongoda is the well-known ancient mandala comprising the northern part of the district of Ganjam and the adjoining part of Puri district in Orissa.

It is supported by the inscription on the Banpur copperplates of the Somavamsi king Indraratha (first quarter of the eleventh century A.D.) who was defeated by Rajendra Chola according to the Tirumalai rock-inscription, dated A.D. 1024. The Banpur inscription has been published by Kunja Behari Tripathy but he has neither furnished the translation of the text nor reproduced the photographs of the first two plates. In his introduction to the text Tripathy has noted that the charter records the gift of the village Lapukhambha (Lapukhamba is noted in the text) located within Khalla-Khanda in the district of Thorana of Kongodamandala, to the Brahmanas. However, a perusal of the text shows that the gift of the village was made, not to the Brahmanas, but for the bali, charu and naividya to be offered to Sri-Khadiravāni-bhattārikā (Sri-Khadiravāni-bhattārikāya valicharunaividyam pradāya). The copper-plates were discovered while digging for the foundation of the Banpur College building at the mound of Achutrajpur adjoining Banpur (District Puri). The same digging operations yielded vestiges of an important Buddhist establishment. The images found during the operations have now been housed in the Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar. From the charter it is abundantly clear that there was a particularly sacred and widely-venerated image of Khadiravāni at this Buddhist centre. The area around Banpur (5 miles from the Chilka lake) falls within the ancient Kongoda-mandala which is also mentioned in the charter. There are several stone images of Tārā still lying at Achutrajpur and Banpur. The largest them appears to be an image of Khadiravāni-Tārā.

The text reads the name of the goddess as Khadiravāni-bhattārika. The use of the word bhattārikā may indicate that she was the presiding goddess of this site. Whether this site in the suburbs of the modern Banpur was in ancient days known as Khadiravana or not, cannot be definitely stated in the present state of our knowledge. It may be recalled in this conneexion that most of the lables of the miniatures in the above mentioned manuscript specify the abodes of the deities represented and the names of the sacred places in which the celebrated images were enshrined; e.g. Kandhara-mandale Kūtaparvate Lokanāthah. Lahtadi se Tārāpure Tārā and

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Sri-Potalake Lokanāthah. It is not unlikely that some of these centres were the first to conceive and carve out the distinctive forms represented by the images and that the names of the particular forms were known after the places.

The miniature in the manuscript of the Cambridge University Library depicts the elegantly-bejewelled goddess of green complexion seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus. With a benign facial expression, the two-armed goddess displays the vara-mudrā with her right palm and holds the stalk of a blue utpala with her left palm resting against the knee. She is flanked by two companions, both seated and two-armed. The one on her right is yellow in complexion and definitely represents Aśokakāntā-Mārichi. She bears in her hand the bough of an aśoka, the flower being appropriately painted in red. The object in her right palm is indistinct. She appears seated on a chariot. The other attending goddess is blue in complexion. She may stand for Ekajaṭā, though the figure is not terrible-looking. Her right palm rests near the chest; In her left palm, which rests on the thigh, appears to be a bowl.

Khadiravāni Tārā occurs on the illustrated cover of a manuscript of the Ashṭasāhasrika-Prajnāpāramitā in the collection of S.K. Saraswati. The date of this manuscript is N.E. 148 corresponding to A.D. 1028. The elegantly-bejewelled central figure of Tārā is green in complexion. Seated in the lalitāsana on a cushion, above a viśva-padma, with her right leg pendant, the two-armed goddess as usual displays the vara-mudrā and the stalk of an uṭpala. To her left and on a separate lotus is the dwarfish, pot-bellied and four-armed Ekajaṭā, blue in complexion and seated in the ardha-paryankāsana with her right knee slightly drawn up. Clad in a tiger-skin, she is fierce-looking with three angry eyes, a chaplet of skulls, ornaments of snakes and her red tongue displayed. In her two right and left hands are a kartri and a skull-cup. The upper right and left hands carry respectively a sword and the stalk of an utpala. In colour, physical features, dress, ornaments and attributes in hands, the representation conforms to the description in Sādhanā nos. 124, 125 and 126 which are how ever, devoted to her independent form.

There is another miniature found on a leaf of an incomplete Eastern Indian manuscript of the Panchavimsatisāhasrikā-Prajnāpāramitā, now in the Baroda Museum. The manuscript is dated in the eighth regnal year of King Harivarma-deva, presumably of the Yādava dynasty of East Bengal. Bhattacharya, who noticed this miniature along with others of this manuscript in the Bulletin of the Baroda State Museum and Picture Gallery, has identified the central figure with Khadiravāni-Tārā. The bejewelled two-armed goddess of green complexion, flanked by two-seated companions, is seated in the lalitāsana on a lotus within a temple with a terraced roof. With her right palm, in the vara-mudrā placed against the knee. She carries the stalk of an utpala in her left palm, kept near the chest. The blue-coloured companion of fierce mien on her left flank is undoubtedly Ekajaṭā with flame-like hair rising upwards. Draped in a tiger-skin, she holds a kartri in her right hand and a skull cup in her left. The identification of the other companion has, however, posed a problem. Like Aśokakānta-Mārichi, she is yellow in complexion. But the curved object in her left hand, according to B. Bhattacharya, is a blue snake which is an attribute of Jānguli who is enjoined to be green in complexion as a companion of Varada-Tārā and Mahāśri-Tārā. In the latter alternative, the figure would certaintly represent Jānguli. In this connexion it may be noted that Jānguli in her independent role is of three colours—green, yellow and white. In her yellow form, she is conceived in the sādhanās as three-faced, six-armed and bearing a sword, a thunderbolt, an arrow, tarjani-pāśa, visha-pushpa and a bow. Curiously enough, the snake is not included in the attributes in the hands of this from of Jānguli, un-avowedly snake-goddess. The available sādhanā enjoins Aśokakāntā as a companion of Khadiravāni. Jānguli is noted as one of the companions of Varada-Tārā. The latter from of Tārā, however, is required in the sādhanā to have four companions. Thus, in case of he attribute there are three possibilities. Varada-Tārā may have a form with only Jānguli and Ekajaṭā as companions. Khadirvāni may have a variant sādhanā in which these two companions have been enjoined. The third possibility is the existence of another distinct form of the green Tārā. for which the relevant sādhanā is yet to be found out.

Another representation, in black stone, shows the attending bejewelled goddess on the dexter holding in her left hand a curved object looking like a snake. The object in the right palm of this standing companion is, unfortunately, unrecognizable in the photograph published by N.K. Bhattasali. The image, found originally in a village of Vikrampur, is now at Dacca. The lavishly-bejewelled three-eyed figure of Tārā is standing with graceful flexions on a double-petalled lotus and displays as usual the vara-mudrā and the stalk of an utpala. Right above her high crown is the figure of Amoghasiddhi, beyond whom are the four other Dhyāni-Buddhas, all carved on the back-slab. The companion standing on the left side of Tārā, is the pot-bellied Ekajaṭā holding a kartri and a skull-cup in her right and left hands. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the tenth-eleventh century A.D.

In Eastern India many two-armed images of Tārā, displaying the vara-mudrā and an utpala and accompanied by two deities have been found. One of these two campanions is generally Ekajaṭā who seems to be the most favourite companion of the goddess The second is a deity other than Aśokākāntā.

The fairly well-known image, now in the Patna Museum (no. 6014), is one of such instances. The importance of this image of blake stone is due to the fact that it is one of the few dated images. It bears a dedicatory inscription, dated in the 35th regnal year of Devapāla (circa A.D. 810-50) of the Pāla dynasty, apart the Buddhist creed and the Tārā-mantra. A short description of the image has been furnished by Stella Kramrisch who has identified it with Khadiravāni-Tārā. In the Patnā Museum Catalogue of Antiquities also the image is noticed not only as Khadiravāni-Tārā but the two companions are designated as Ekajaṭā and Aśokakānta-Mārichi. The central figure of Tārā is depicted within a makara-torana. With her right palm, in the vara-mudrā, resting on the knee, and the left hand carrying the stalk of an utpala, the elegantly-bejewelled goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a double-petalled lotus, the right foot being on a second lotus. The corpulent fierce-looking female companion on the dexter, who is seated in the māharājalilā, appears to be Ekajāṭā. The attributes in her lower right and left hands are a khartri and a kapāla, while the two upper hands hold above the head an elephant-skin.

In the Indian Musedm, Calcutta. On the left side of the goddess is a fierce-looking male figure with his left palm resting on the top of a hatchet and the right palm with the raised tarjani at the chest. On the right of the goddess is the pot-bellied Ekajatā with terrible facial exprsssion and standing in the praryālidhapose. In her right and left hands are a kartri and a skull-cup. The two upper hands, rising above the shoulders hold aloft the skin of an elephant. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the tenth century A.D.

Housed in the Sarnath Museum. is and excellent standing sculpture of Tārā. On the dexter of Tārā is the pot-bellied. Dwarfish and fierce Ekajatā. The objects i.e. kartri and skull-cup in her two hands are damaged. The remaining two hands hold above the head, the skin of an elephant. The main figure is two-armed and holding the usual attributes.

Found at Itkhauri (District Hazaribagh), a standing two-armed image of Tārā, shows these very companions. The one on the dexter represents the pot-bellied and dwarfish Ekajaṭā of fierce appearance. There is an elephant-skin spread like a canopy above her head, Presumably, this is held by two upper hands. The natural right hand carries a sword, while the object in the corresponding left hand is either a skull-cup or a shield. The other companion is standing with her right fore-arm (palm in the abhaya-mudra) resting on a staff. The left palm of the bejewelled figure, which is placed on the thigh, appears to hold the string of a noose. The richly-bejewelled main image is standing in the sama-pada on a visvapadma with the usual attributes. The image is dated in the ninth year of the Pratihara king Mahendrapala (circa A.D, 886-908).

There is an inscribed two-armed standing stone image of Tārā with the vara-mudrā and the stalk of an utpala, flanked by two standing bejewelled female companions. One of the two carries a sword and a kapāla in her lower right and left hands respectively, the upper two hands holding an elephant-skin; with hair rising upward, she is pot-bellied and fierce-looking and possibly stands for Ekajatā. The other companion holds a chāmara with her right hand, the left hand resting on a paraśu which is not the attribute of Asokakāntā. Consquently, this image also does not fulfil the requirements of the sādhanā of Khadiravāni-Tārā, Found at Gaya, the image is ascribable to the ninth century A.D. on the evidence of the palaeography of the inscription, recording the Buddhist creed on the halo.

The standing two-armed image of Tārā from Chauduar (near Cuttack) illustrated by Ramaprasad Chanda also shows two standing, two-armed female companions. The one on the left side of the goddess is the corpulent Ekajatā with a sword in her right hand and a skull-cup in the left hand. The object in the left hand of the attendant on the dexter looks like a shield, the attribute in the right hand being indistinct. The image thus cannot be identified with Khadiravāni-Tārā as suggested by some scholars.

Instances of this type of two-armed images or Tārā in the company of two female deities can be multiplied. While one of the companions in most cases is Ekajata, the other presents varied āyudhas which do not conform to those in the hands of the companions prescribed in the Sādhanamālā. There is a tendency to identify image of this category with Khadiravāni-Tārā. The number of images conforming to the dhyāna of Khadiravāni-Tārā, discovered throughout Eastern India is, however, fairly numerous. This shows the popularity of this aspect of Tārā, despite the fact that only one sādhanā of the Sādhanamālā is devoted to her. Practically all the important Buddhist sites and museums having a good collection of Buddhist antiquities possess images of this goddess. Her images are also widely noticed, though not always appropriately labelled.

Thus, the Catalogue of the Archaological Relics in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, notices a two-armed image of Tārā recovered from Nimdighi (P.S. Niyamatpur, District Rajshahi, Bangladesh). The image represents Khadiravāni Tārā. With the vara-mudrā and the stalk of an utpala, the goddess is seated in the lalitāsana attitude. The seated female companion hoiding a thunderbolt and a flower (looks like an utpala) on the dexter is evidently Aśokakānta-Mārichi, and the fierce-looking three-eyed corpulent female figure with a kartri and a kapāla in hands of the left is Ekajaṭā. Images bearing Acc. no. A (c)^2/91 and 2547 of this Museum also stand for Khadiravānl-Tārā.

An elaborate stone image (Ill. 27) of Khadiravāni-Tārā from Cuttack is illustrated in the Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities. With the stalk of an utpala in her slightly-raised left hand, the elaborately-bejewelled goddess is seated in the lalitāsana on a double-petalled lotus, the right foot resting on a second lotus. The stretched right hand, which is partly lost, was apparently in the vara-mudrā. The bejewelled Aśokakāntā on the right of the goddess and the pot-bellied, dwarfish and fierce-looking Ekajaṭā on the left are both two-afmed and seated in the lalitāsana. The former with a high mukuta holds an aśoka-branch in her right hand; the object in the left hand is an utpata, In the right and left hands of Ekajatā are a kartri and a skull-cup. The main figure of Tārā is depicted. On either side of this arch is a tiny female attendant, standing with h chāmara in the right hand and with the left palm on the thigh. Arrayed around the pyramidal roof of the pidha deul, which is crowned by a heavy amalaka, are four miniature stupas, each containing of Dhyāni-Buddha. The fifth stupa, which is reproduced in the centre of the top foil of the aech and right above the mukuta of the goddess, bears the figure of Amoghasiddhi with the abhaya-mudrā, the spiritual sire of Khadiravāni-Tārā. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the eleventh century A,D. The representation of the goddess within a pitha shrine may indicate that the donor and the sculptor were possibly inspired by a well-known and a sacred temple enshrining the goddess at a Buddhist centre of pilgrimage. In this connexion we may recall that the miniature depicting Khadiravāni-Tārā of Kongodamandala in the manuscript of the Cambridge Uniyersity Library shows the goddess within a pitha shrine.

Daya Ram Sahni, in his Catalogue of the Museum of Archaelogy at Sarnath, has noticed a sandstone standing image of Tārā. This image apparentty represents. Khaddavāani-Tārā. With a calm facial expression and half-closed eyes, the lavishly-bejewelled goddess stands with prominent bodily flexions on a viśva-padma. Both the fore-arms are missing. The extended right hand must have been in the vara-mudra. The left hand presumbly held an utpala, the stalk of which is partly extant. The goddess bears the figure of Amoghasiddhi or her crown. She is flanked by two standing female companions, both two-armed and bejewelled. The one on her right side is Aśokakānta-Mārichi with a thunderbolt in her right side is palm held near the chest and an aśoka-bough (damaged) in her left hand placed at the thigh. The other, on the left side of the goddess, is the pot-bellied and dwarfish Ekajaṭā of fierce mien with flame-like hair rising upwards. The damaged attributes in her hands appear to be a kartri and a skull-cup, Stylistically, the image is ascribable to about the eleventh century A.D.

Another standing stone image of Khadiravāni-Tārā is under worship within the sanctum of the temple of Suryā at Badgaon near Nalanda. The goddess is flanked by Ekajata and Aśokakānta-Mārichi, the latter with the varja and the aśoka-branch in her right and left hands respectively. The image belongs to the late Pala period.

We have not come acrose any image of Khadriravāni-Tārā earlier than the tenth century A.D. It seems that the conception of Tārā of this name in the company of Aśokakāntā-Mārichi and Ekajaṭā is not prior to the ninth century A D. though the econographical features of Tārā herself had already been formulated as early as the sixth century A.D. The form became enormously popular and was widely repsesented in the eleventh century.

(vii) Vajra-Tārā

The basic conception of the goddess is inherent in her name. Vajra-Tārā literally means the Tārā of the adamantine essence, the absolute of Vajrayāna. In its technical sense, vajra, which is the symbol of the ultimate reality of Vajrayāna, is equated with śūnyatā. According to the Vajrayānists śūnyatā is designated as Vajra because it is firm and sound, and cannot be changed, cannot be pierced, cannot be penetrated, cannot be turnt, and cannot be destroyed. Vajra-Tārā is conceived as a powerful deity. The fact that she bears on her crown five Dhyāni-Buddhas indicates that she is the embodiment of all the five Skandhas (cosmic elements)—vijnāna (consciousness), rūpa (form), vedana (sensation), samjnā (name) and samskāra (conformation) over which preside respectively Akshobhya, Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi. Among these five Ratna Sambhava is the Kulesh of Vajra-Tārā.

There are as many as six sādhanas (nos. 93-97 and 110) devoted to Vajra-Tārā in the Sādhanamālā. Sādhānā No. 96, is short and composed by Arya-Nāgārjuna. The iconographical features of the goddess presented by this particular sādhanā radically differ from those of the remaining five sādhanās. The goddess in this sādhanā is described in the following terms.

सितवर्णां सितकमलोपरिचन्द्रासनस्थां वज्रपर्य्यङ्किनीं सितचन्द्राश्रितां षोडशाब्दवपुष्मतीं नानाभरणभूषितां दक्षिणे हस्ते वरदां वामेनोत्पलधारिणीं अशेषभारविध्वंसन्तीं स्वकायरोमकूपतो बुद्धबोधिसत्त्वान् स्फुरन्तीं भावयेत्। ईदृशीं भावनां स्थिरीकृत्य मन्त्रं जपेत्। स्वहृदि सितमष्टारचक्रं विचिन्त्य अरं प्रति अष्टौ अक्षरान् विभाव्य मध्ये स्वाहाकारं दत्त्वा जपेत्, मनसा वाचयेन्मन्त्रं ॐ तारे तुत्तारे स्वाहा। अनेन चिन्तितमात्रेण सर्व्वमारैरवध्यो भवेत्।[1]

From the above dhyāna it appears that Vajra-Tārā, white in colour, sits in the vajraparyankāsana on a white lotus. Decked in various ornaments, she displays the vara-mudrā with her right palm and holds an utpala with her left hand. She is conceived as the destroyer of all Māras and excluding Buddha and Bodhisattvas from her romakūpas.

This from is similar to that of Mrityuvanchana-Tārā, who is also white in colour, sits in the vajra-paryankāsana, carries an utpala and exhibits the vara-mudrā. While she bears in her heart a wheel, in the case of other Sādhanās of Vajra-Tārā, the meditator himself would conceive a wheel in his heart. Thus worshipper has to identify himself with the deity in the dhyāna.

ताराभट्टारिका-रूपेणात्मानं पश्यति।

The attributes and sitting posture of the two-armed Vajra-Tārā are also identical with those of Mahattari-Tārā, who is, however, green in colour. In this connexion mention may be made of an illustration of Vajra panjarabhāshitā Vajra-Tārā in the collection of the National Library of Peking. The single-headed and two armed goddess, wearing kundalas among other ornaments, seated in the vajra-paryankāsana, appears to hold the stalk of an utpala with her left hand, the right palm being in the vara-mudrā.

This sādhanā describing the two-armed from of Tārā is radically different from the other five sādhanās conceiving a four-headed and eight-armed from of Vajra-Tarā of yellow complexion. According to Bhattacharya, the date of Nāgārjuna, who composed this sādhanā, is the middle of the seventh century A.D. The authorship of one (no 110) of the remaining sādhanās is ascribed to Ratnākaraśānti, contemporary of King Mahipala (circa A.D. 988-1038) of the Pala dynasty. Evidently, the from of Vajra-Tārā underwent transformation with the progress of the esoteric doctrines and rituals in the later period. The description of the goddess in the five sādhanās, which are very elaborate, is estentially of a common nature. Further, all these sādhanās conceive ten deities forming the maṇḍala around the supreme goddess.

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[1] Sādhanamālā, Vol. I: p. 193-94.

Sadhana no. 93 describes the form of the main deity in the following terms.

मातृमण्डलमध्यस्थां तारादेवीं विभावयेत् ।
अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥
कनकवर्णनिभां भव्यां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम् ।
पञ्चबुद्धमहामुकुटीं वज्रसूर्य्याभिषेकजाम् ॥
नवयौवनलावण्यां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ।
विश्वपद्मसमासीनां रक्तप्रभाविभूषिताम् ॥
वज्रपाश तथा शङ्खसच्छरोद्यतदक्षिणाम् ।
वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलधनुस्तर्ज्जनीवामधारिणीम् ॥
वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगेन साधयेद् भुवनत्रयम् ।[1]

'The meditator should conceive Vajra-Tārā in the centre of the circle of divine Mothers. She is eight-armed, four-faced and decked in all ornaments. Golden in complexion, she is graceful and radiant with the auspicious marks of virgin girl. She bears on her crown the figures of five Buddhas, and she is born of the consecration-water of Vajra and Sūnya. She is resplendent in her blooming youth and wears dangling gold kundalas. Seated on a viśva-padma, she radiates reddish light. She holds in her right hands a vajra (thunderbolt), a pāśa (noose), a śankha (conch-shell) and a śara (arrow) and in her left a vajrānkuśa, an utpala and a dhanus (bow), the fourth hand being in the tarjani-mudrā. Conceiving her in the vajra-paryankāsana, the worshipper may conquer the three worlds.'

In Sādhanā no. 94 the description of the goddess is nearly the same. The attributes in her right hands are a thunderbolt, an arrow, a conch-shell and the vara-mudrā, while those in her left hands are an utpala, a bow, a vajrānkuśa and vajrapāśatarjani. Thus, one of the right hands of the goddess in this dhyāna is in the vara-mudrā, instead of holding a noose (as prescribed in Sadhana no. 93) which, marked with a thunderbolt, appears in the left hand displaying the tarjani-mudrā. Further, in this sādhanā, we find four Buddhas instead of the five (in Sādhanā no. 93) on the crown of the goddess. This sādhanā tells us about the colour

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1. Sādhanamālā, Vol. I, p. 194.

of the four faces which are pīta (yellow), krishna (black or dark blue), sita (white) and rakta (red), as one moves clockwise. All the faces are stated to be three-eyed.

The same complexions of the four faces of the goddess are prescribed in Sādhanā no. 95, which is practically in prose. Like Sādhanā no. 93, it prescribes five Tathāgatas on the crown of the goddess. While the attributes in her left hands are absolutely identical with those prescribed in Sādhanā no. 93, those in the right hands are a thunderbolt, a noose, a conch-shell, an arrow and the vara-mudrā. As the number of attributes is five, two of them must have been in one of the four hands of the goddess who is described as yellow in complexion. From the evidence of an image from Ratnagiri, it appears that the hand in the vara-mudrā bears the conch-shell as well.

The attributes in the hands of the goddess in Sādhanā no. 97 are identical with those prescribed in Sādhanā no. 93. However, the utpala noted here is yellow in colour and a plain elephant-goad (not combined with a thunderbolt) is enjoined. The front face of the goddess is of golden colour like the rest of the body. The right (dexter), back and left faces are white, blue and red in colour respectively. The Sādhanā prescribes four Buddhas on the crown. The verses describing the goddess in Sādhanā no. 110, which is the most elaborate one, are practically the same as those in Sadhana no. 93. Consequently, the attributes, sitting posture, colour and others are identical. The only difference is with regard to the number of Buddhas on the crown, who are four in this sādhanā. These Tathāgatas are Vairochana, Akshobhya, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi facing the four directions.

The characteristic features of Vajra-Tārā, as gathered from the above five sādhanās, may be summarized as follows :

The bejewelled goddess, in blooming youth, is seated invariably in the vajra-paryankāsana on a viśva-padma. Of golden yellow complexion, she is four-faced. The principal face is golden yellow in colour in conformity with the complexion of the body, the right face is either white or dark blue (krishna), the black face is either dark blue (krishna) or white and the left face is red. The goddess bears on her crown either four (Sādhanā nos. 94, 97 and 110) or all the five Dhyāni-Buddhas (Sádhanā nos. 93 and 95). She is endowed with eight arms. She may carry in her right hahds a thunderbolt, a noose, a conch-shell and an arrow and in left hands a vajrānkuśa (or a plain elephant-goad), an utpala, a bow and the tarjani-mudrā (Sādhanā nos. 93, 97 and 110). Or, she may exhibit a thunder-bolt, a noose, a conch-shell, an arrow and the vara-mudrā with her right hands and a vajrānkuśa, an utpala, a bow and the tarjani-mudrā with her left (Sādhanā no. 95). She may also have a thunderbolt, a conch-shell, an arrow and vara in her right hands and a vajrānkuśa, an utpala, a bow and vajrapāśatarjani in her left hands (Sādhanā no. 94). Thus, the emblems are the same in all the dhyānas. Only in three sādhanās, the vara-mudrā is not prescribed. The hand, holding the arrow is generally raised. Among the ornaments with which the goddess is decked, special mention is made of the chalatkanakakundalas (dangling gold ear-rings) in

Sādhanā nos. 93, 97 and 110. This must be a special characteristic of the goddess, as we find kuṇḍalas almost invariably in the ears of almost all the images of the goddess.

The description of the goddess in the Nishpannayogāvali of Abhayākaragupta[1], a contemporary of King Ramapala of the Pala dynasty also agrees with the above sādhanās, particularly no. 93, as may be seen from the following extract from the chapter embodying the Vajra-Tārā-Maṇḍala.

वज्रतारामण्डले वज्रपंजरान्तर्धर्मो दयागर्भकूटागारवलयस्य नाभौ विश्वाष्टदलकमलस्य कर्णिकायां चन्द्रे भगवती वज्रतारा सुवर्णवर्णा पञ्चबुद्धमुकुटा हेमाभशुभ्रनीललोहितमूलसव्य-पश्चिमोत्तरचतुर्वक्त्रा अष्टभुजा सव्यैर्वज्रं पाशं शरं शङ्खं च बिभ्रती वामैः पीतोत्पलं चापमङ्कुशं तर्जनीं च।

पूर्वदले पुष्पतारा शुक्ला कराभ्यां पुष्पदाम बिभ्रती ।
दक्षिणे धूपतारा कृष्णा हस्ताभ्यां धूपकटच्छुं दधाना ।
पश्चिमे दीपतारा पीता दीपशाखान्वितकरद्वया ।
उत्तरे गन्धतारा रक्ता गन्धशङ्खोद्यतकरद्वया ।
चतस्रोऽपि देव्यश्चन्द्रस्थाः ।
अग्न्यादिदलेषु वैरोचनादिवर्णाश्चक्रवज्रपद्मखड्गाः ।
द्वितीयपुटे पूर्वद्वारे वज्राङ्कुशी शुक्लाङ्कुशाङ्कसव्यकरा ।
दक्षिणे वज्रपाशी पीता पाशभृत्सव्यपाणिपल्लवा ।
पश्चिमे वज्रस्फोटा रक्ता वज्रस्फोटाग्रसव्यकरा ।
उत्तरे वज्रघण्टा श्यामा वज्रघण्टाङ्कदक्षिणभुजा ।
आग्नेयादिकोणस्थविश्वाम्बुजेषु लोचनादिविशुद्धचा
बोधिचित्तं घटो मेरुर्वह्निकुन्डं महाध्वजः ।
ऊर्ध्वं उष्णीषविजया शुक्ला चक्रभृत्सव्यभुजा ।
अधः सुम्भा नीला सव्येन नागपाशधरा ।

एता षड्देव्यः सतर्जनीकवामकरा विश्वाब्जसूर्यस्थाः । दशापि द्विभुजैकवक्त्र । द्वादशापि वजाषर्यत्रिन्यश्चलेत्कनककुन्डला विचित्रवस्त्ररत्ननेपथ्याः पद्मरागप्रभाः।
बज्रतारायाः कुलेशो रत्नेशः ।[2]

The eight-armed goddess is conceived as seated in the vajra-paryankāsan in the centre of an eight-petalled lotus. She, of golden complexion, has four Saumya faces; the principal, right, back (paschima) and left (uttara) are golden, white, blue and red in colour respectively. In her four right hands are a thunderbolt, a noose, an arrow and a conch-shell, while her four left hands show an utpala of yellow colour, a bow, an elephant-goad and the tarjani-mudrā. Her crown bears five Buddhas. Her spiritual sire, however, is Ratneśa, i.e. Ratnasambhava, who is also yellow Dhyāni-Buddha of Vajra-Tārā. The Nishpannayogāvali, like the already-noted three sādhanās, enjoins '*chalatkanakakuṇḍalas*' to be worn by the goddess.

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[1] Fourth quarter of the eleventh century and the first quarter of the twelfth century A.D.

[2] Nishpannayogāvali, p. 38.

The Nishpannayogāvali and also five (nos. 93, 94, 95, 97 and 110) sādhanās of the Sādhanamāla describe the attending goddesses forming the maṇḍala of Vajra-Tārā, Sādhanamālā says that these ten deities are originating from the ten syllables of the Tārā-mantra (om Tāre tuttāre ture svāhā). According to the Nishpannayogāvali Vajra-Tārā is in the centre of the eight-petalled lotus. The eastern, southern, western and northern petals of this lotus are occupied by Pushpa-Tārā, Dhupa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā. The remaining four petals of the intermediate directions (Agni-koṇa, Nirriti-koṇa, Vāyu-koṇa and Iśāna-koṇa) bear four symbols, viz., wheel, thunderbolt, lotus and sword. These are the symbols of Vairochana, Akṣhobhya, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi, who are the parental Dhyani-Buddhas of Pushpa-Tārā. Dhūpa-Tārā, Dīpa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā respectively.

In the second circle, according to the Nishpannayogāvali, these are four goddesses—Vajrānkuśi, Vajrapāśi, Vajrasphotā and Vajraghantā, respectively guarding the eastern, southern, western and northern gates. Their spiritual sires are Vairochana, Akshobhya, Amitābha and Amogha-siddhi respectively. In the intermediate directions of this circle are Bodhichittaghatā, meru, vahnikunḍa and mahādhvaja, the symbols purified by goddess Lochanā and others.

According to Nispannayogāvali, all these ten deities are one-faced and two-armed. Bejewelled in various ornaments, they are seated in the vajra-paryankāsana.

Of the four goddesses in the inner circle, Pushpa-Tārā, according to the Nishpannayogāvali, is white and holds with her two hands a garland of flowers. Dhūpa-Tārā, of black (or dark blue) complexion, carries an incense-stick. Of yellow colour is Dīpa-Tārā who holds with her two hands a lamp-stick (dipa-sikha). Gandha-Tārā, of red complexion, bears with her two hands a conch-shell containing perfumes, presumably sandal-paste.

The description of these four goddesses in the five sādhanās (nos. 93, 94, 95, 97 and 110) of the Sādhanamālā is the same. In Sādhanā no. 94 we have an incense-vase (dhūpa-ghata) instead of the incense-stick in the hand of Dhūpa-Tārā. Two of the sādhanās (nos. 95 and 97) further inform us that these four deities originate from om, tā, re and tu, the first four syllables of the Tārā-mantra. From the very names and objects in their hands it is certain that these four goddesses are the deified *pūjopakaranas* (materials used in ritualistic worship, i.e. flower (pushpa), incense (dhūpa), lamp (dīpa) and sandal-paste or unguent (gandha).

According to the Nishpannayogāvali, all the four deities guarding the four cardinal directions of the second circle exhibit the tarjani-mudrā with their left hands. The objects in the right hands of Vajrānkuśi of white complexion, Vajrapāśi of yellow colour, Vajrasphotā of red complexion and Vajraghantā of green colour (śyāma) are respectively an elephant-goad, a noose, a vajra-sphota and a vajra-ghantā.

Though the objects in the right hands of these four single-faced and two-armed guardian goddesses are the same in most of the sādhanās, there are certain differences existing in the sādhanās. In the Nishpannayogāvali all the four are conceived as seated in the vajra-paryankāsana, which is the āsana prescribed by Sādhanā no. 97 also. Sādhanā no. 93 makes them ālidhapādastha, i.e. standing in ālidha, while Sādhanā no. 94 prescribes lalitākshepa (seated in the lalitāsana) for them. The remaining two sādhanās (nos. 95 and 110) are silent about the posture.

According to this Sādhanā these four goddesses are terrible-looking (vikṛtavadanā) and wear snakes as ornaments (sarpābharaṇā). While Sādhanā no. 94 states them to be *ishatkarālavadanā*, Sādhanā no. 97 prescribes snakes for their ornaments. From the sādhanās it appears that these four deities originate from tā, re, ṭu and re, the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth syllables of the Tārā-mantra.

The sādhanās differ slightly in regard to the names of these four guardian deities. These are called Vajrānkuśi, Vajrapāśi, Vajrasphoti (or Vajrasphotā) and Vajraghantā in Sādhanā nos. 93 and 94, Ankuśa-Tārā, Pāśa-Tārā in Sādhanā no. 95, Ankuśi (also Vajrānkuśi, Pāśi (or Vajrapāśi), Sphotā (Vajrasphotā, i.e. Vajra-burst) and Ghantā (or Vajravesa) in Sādhanā no. 97 and Ankuśi, Pāśini, Vajrasphotā and Vajraghanta in Sādhanā no. 110.

Vajra-Tārā in her eight-armed form is exceptionally popular in Tantric Buddhism. This is proved by the number of sādhanās devoted to this form and by the find of a good number of images in India and outside. The reasons for her popularity are to be found in the sādhanās themselves. She is endowed with the supreme power of granting success to her worshippers in various protective and destructive rites.

While enumerating the benefits that would accrue from the worship of Vajra-Tārā, the sādhanās hold before the worshippers exceedingly attractive prospects of worldly enjoyments, material prosperity, immunity from troubles and dangers and success in all kinds of undertakings (*sarvakarmaprasiddhaye*). Apparently, these allurements were incorporated to attract materialistic men who care more for this world than for spiritual upliftment. Some of the magic rites with the help of the Tārā-mantra mentioned in the sādhanās are indicated below with the idea of furnishing the advantages and benefits expected by some sections of the votaries of Vajra-Tārā.

By tying a knot with one end of the cloth over which the mantra is muttered, a man can travel to the inaccessible tracts of the Vindhyas encountering any difficulty.

Tigers, robbers, crocodiles, lions, snakes, elephants, buffaloes, bears, bulls and the like will disappear or even destroyed at the mere reciting of the name of the goddess.

The feather of a crow over which this mantra is recited thirty-two times, and is deposited within the house of an enemy, will make the enemy flee from the house.

A person can be shackled with the help of the mantra. Similarly, an imprisoned man may get released with certain rites performed with this mantra.

Having recited the Tārā-dhārani seven times and rubbing his eyes, if a man approaches a king, the king, like a docile disciple, will honour him, lavish bounties on him and will act as a slave.

The maximum number of magical practices and charms with the help of the Tārā-mantra is prescribed for bewitching and overpowering (vaśikaraṇa) women folk. One such rite is the offering of one hundred and eight utpalas into fire with this mantra. There are many more magical charms, some being extremely crude. The horrible effect of one of such gross charms to make the woman submit forcibly to the desires of the performer is described in the following.

पाशेन जालक बध्वा अंकुशेण बिदार्यं च ।
चरणाबुत्पलेनैब बध्वाकृष्य समन्ततः ।
मद्यं पादतले ध्यात्वा दासीरूपेण भुञ्जयेत् ॥

Sādhanā no. 110 embodies, in the introductory portion where the yogin is enjoined to prepare himself before conceiving the form of the goddess, certain sublime aspects of Mahāyāna. The sādhaka is to remove all sins in him, to honour all merits (kuśala) of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Āryas and individuals and to develop himself the merits which will lead him to the anuttara-sambodhi (transcendental perfect enlightenment) so that he may be able to cause well-being and happiness of all living creatures and to establish them in the wisdom of Buddha and in the path of Nirvāṇa.

The idea behind incorporating both noble ideas of maitri, karunā, etc. and gross elements aimed at selfish gain to the extent of harming others in the sādhanās is to cater to all inclinations, so that people from all walks of life resort to the worship of the formidable Vajra-Tārā.

The highly Tantric charaeter of the deity is evident from the fact that out of six Tantric rites (Shatkarma), three, namely stambhana (stopping or paralysing all actions of human beings), vaśikarana (enchanting and bringing under submission) and uchchātana (causing a person to quit his house or occupation), and partially māraṇa (destroying) are performed with the aid of the mantra of Vajra-Tārā, who is called duṣhtastambhanī and who is invoked for jambhana (crushing, destroying), stambhana, mohana (bewildering, causing delusion, distraction and stupefaction) and bandhana (causing imprisonment) as may be seen from the following mālā or dharani mantra of Vajra-Tārā.

नाम आर्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय महासत्त्वाय, तदयथा 'ओं तारे तुत्तारे तुरे—सर्वंदुष्टप्रदुष्टन मम कृते—जम्भय, स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुं हुं हुं फट् फट् सर्वदुष्टस्तम्भिनि तारे स्वाहा।

Almost all the attributes in the hands of Vajra-Tārā can be explained in the context of the upachāras and prayogas stated in the sādhanās. She carries a noose (pāsa) for binding enemies who are also supposed to be terrified by her raised index-finger (tarjani). The noose also symbolizes vaśikaraṇa, the arrow being intended to touch the heart of the desired person. The elephant-goad is utilized for striking the heart and also for attracting (ākarshaṇa). The intention behind the placing of a conch-shell in the hand of the goddess is not explained. It may perhaps be intended for stambhana. In ancient times the leaders or generals in the battle-field used to hold a śankha which served as a trumpet to give orders to the troops and to strike terror among the enemies. In conformity with her name, Vajra-Tārā holds a vajra, the invincible weapon, which strikes the wicked to pieces. The utpala is the characteristic attribute or symbol of Tārā. Even the stalk of this sublime flower is stated to be used for binding the feet of the desired woman to be submitted to the will of the invoker.

The explanation of the attributes in the context of the upachāras and prayogas in the sādhanās is intended for the materialistic people caring for worldly pleasures. The connotations of these attributes implying the symbolic character of the goddess in the eyes of the sādhakas of the higher plane are not explicit in the sādhanās. Here, we may make an attempt with the help of information gathered from other sources to explain these emblems from the point of view of these sādhakas. The attribute which characterizes Tārā, the absolute goddess of Vajrayāna, is appropriately the vajra, symbolizing void, which, like a diamond is hard, indestructible, impenetrable, unshakable and eternal. It stands for the adamantine truth and symbolizes the supreme strength of the Buddhist Doctrine which crushes all passions that tie the sentient beings to the material world and removes all untruth and evils. The noose is intended not only for binding the enemies of Buddhism to protect the dharma but also for catching the sentient beings in order to liberate them from the prison of samsāra and to lead them to salvation. The conch-shell is the imperious call inviting the faithfull to assemble and to listen to Buddhist discourses. By its dharma-ghosha, the sentient beings are awakened to take shelter under the Buddhist Doctrine. With its sound spreading far and wide, it symbolizes the dissemination of the dharma. The bow and arrow are meant to awaken people from forgetfulness, carelessness and delusion due to various defects and to ensure concentration and wisdom which removes false notions. They are also meant for shooting the Māras. The elephant-goad is the imperious command bringing all sentient beings under submission (sarvabhūta-vaśankari ājnā). It pierces the heart of the wicked and goads sentient beings to embrace Buddhism and to obey the precepts of the Doctrine. The tarjani by indicating the lapses and defects, is an order to be careful in the right observances.

Vajra-Tārā is mentioned in Sādhanā no. 107 devoted to Dhanada-Tārā. Here she is in the role of a companion goddess and occupies the eastern point of the compass, the southern, western and northern quarters having Ratna-Tārā, Padma-Tārā respectively. The names of the companion goddesses, their colour and the attributes in their right hands would suggest their close connexion with four of the Tathāgatas or Dhyāni-Buddhas and they may thus stand for Lochanā and others. In this role Vajra-Tārā is one-faced and two-armed, bearing in her right hand a thunderbolt and in the left hand an utpala. Black or dark blue in complexion, she, decorated with various ornaments, is seated in the *sattvaparyankāsana* on a viśva-padma.

Eastern India produced a good number of the images of the eight-armed Vajra-Tārā. Some images depict her alone; in some others she is attended by Pushpa-Tārā, Dhūpa-Tārā, Dīpa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā. There are still others in which the deities of the entire mandala are represented.

One of the unattended images has been found at Ratnagiri, District Cuttack, Orissa. Originally it was placed within the niche of a stone stupa. Made of chlorite, the image is in high relief, the back-slab being oblong. Consequently, three heads are visible. Clad in a sadi and bejewelled in anklets, bangles, armlets with a central projection, a necklace, earrings and high conical crowns, the eight-armed goddess is seated in the *vajraparyankāsana* on a viśva-padma. The Dhyāni-Buddhas are conspicuous by their absence on the crowns. Of her four right hands, the uppermost is raised and holds a thunderbolt and the next two carry a noose and an arrow, while the lowest palm, in the vara-mudrā, bears a conch-shell. The principal left hand of the goddess touches her chest in the tarjani-mudrā. Among the remaining three hands the lowest holds an elephant-goad, the next the stalk of an utpala and the uppermost a bow. The facial expression of the goddess is calm. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the tenth-eleventh century A.D. It may be noted that the artist has made a glaring mistake so far as the hands bearing the bow and arrow are concerned. These two hands should be corresponding to each other. In respect of attributes in the hands, the image conforms to Sādhanā no. 95, In the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, there is an image of Vajra-Tārā. The exact provenance of the image is not known. A.K. Coomaraswamy has noted it to be of the north Indian origin and assigned it to the ninth or tenth century A.D. Stylistically, the image belongs to Eastern India. Coomaraswamy has not enumerated the attributes in the hands of the goddess. The image with four faces and eight arms is greatly abraded. The attribute in the upper-most right hand which is in the attitude of hurling a thunderbolt is broken, while the lowest right palm holds an ovalish object which is possibly a conch-shell. The objects in the remaining two right hands are a noose (half-broken) and an arrow. The lowest left palm (greatly defaced) is near the chest; presumably, it is in the tarjani-mudrā. The next two hands hold respectively the stalk of an utpala and a bow. The elephant-goad in the remaining hands is not distinct in the published photograph. Seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* on a cushion above a viśva-padma, the goddess is three-eyed; the third eye on the forehead was, presumably, inlaid with silver. No Dhyāni-Buddha could be recognized on the high mukuta of the goddess.

There is an exceptionally fine image of Vajra-Tārā within the Uttaresvara temple at Ayodhyā, District Balasore, Orissa. A very short notice of the image has appeared from the pen of Nagendranath Vasu, who fortunately, published a photograph. With the help of this illustration, it is, however, possible to furnish a detailed description of this interesting image which is in stone. The image is in high relief and the major portion of the back of the icon is shown by cutting it out of the oblong back-slab. Only three heads are visible in the illustration. All the heads wear high conical crowns. On the mukuta of the central head is a Dhyāni-Buddha with hands placed near the waist (either in the dharmachakra-mudrā or in the dhyāna mudrā). The expression of all the three faces, is extremely pleasing and benign. Dressed in a sādi, tied by an elaborate girdle and a scarf, worn in an upaviti fashion and lavishly decked in anklets, bangles, valayas, armlets, a broad necklace, ear-rings and crowns, the goddess is seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* on a fully-blossomed double-petalled lotus.

Of the four right hands of the goddess, the raised uppermost wields a thunderbolt, the next holds a couple of arrows, the third a nāga-pāśa and the fourth a conch-shell. One of the left hands displays the tarjani-mudrā near the chest, the second holds the stalk of an utpala, the third a bow and the fourth, the uppermost, an elephant-goad marked by a thunderbolt. Around the heads of the goddess is an ovalish halo edged by tongues of flames. It may be noted that the hand holding the conch-shell is not in the vara-mudrā. The attributes in the hands of the goddess are thus identical with those prescribed by the Nishpannayogāvali and Sādhanā nos. 93, 97 and 110.

On either side of the goddess are two bejewelled haloed female deities, one each near the knee and the other near the face of the main goddess. All these four figures are seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana*, each on a viśva-padma. The one near the right knee of the main figure carries in her two hands (placed on the lap) a lotus and evidently represents Pushpa-Tārā. The second, going clockwise holds with her two hands a burning lamp, the third an incense-burner and the fourth a conch-shell which is supposed to contain gandha. The three deities thus stand for Dīpa-Tārā, Dhūpa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā respectively. On the pedestal are three kneeling devotees, a lamp, an incense-burner and two stands, each with a conical pile of offerings. At the extant top corner is a vidyādhara flying through clouds. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the tenth-eleventh century A.D.

Pushpa-Tārā, Dhūpa-Tārā, Dīpa-Tārā and Gandha-Tārā are not available in the mutilated image of Vajra-Tārā found at Bara, District Birbhum, West Bengal, and now housed in the Museum (Acc. no. S. 10) of the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal. The image, however, preserves the remaining six companions of Vajra-Tārā. Made of blackish stone, the image of fairly good workmanship, is stylistically attributable to the eleventh century A.D.

The lavishly-bejewelled Vajra-Tārā, with kāraṇḍa-mukutas and kuṇḍalas, is seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* on a fully-blossomed double-petalled lotus, issuing from the base of the stem of the lotus. Lit by a faint smile, the expression of all the four faces, each with three eyes, is benign and placid. On the kāraṇḍa-mukuta of the principal head is a seated figure of Ratnasambhava, in the vara-mudrā, the spiritual sire of Vajra-Tārā. All the eight arms of the goddess are broken; consequently, none of the attributes in the hands are preserved.

In this connexion mention may be made of a large bust of fine-grained grey-coloured stone found at Sarnath, now exhibited in the National Museum, New Delhi (Acc. no. 47.32). The bust has been identified with Vajra-Tārā by Daya Ram Sahni. Though none of the attributes in the hands is preserved, it is likely that Sahni is correct in his identification. The image is now bereft of all left hands and only small portions of the four right arms (near the shoulder) are extant. The available portion of the uppermost right arm is raised in the attitude of hurling a thunderbolt. The lavishly-bejewelled bust has four heads. Though carved in the round, the image was meant to be seen from the front. Of the ornaments an elaborate necklace with a long pendant, Hāras of beaded strings, armlets large earrings and elaborate crowns are preserved. The mukuta of the main head has four triangular projections, each containing a Dhyāni-Buddha. The two projections in the middle are arrayed one above the other, the upper rising higher above the lower. The lower projection immediately above the forehead of the goddess contains Ratnasambhava in the vara-mudrā and not Akshobhya in the bhumisparśa-mudrā as stated by Sahni. The upper projection bears Amitābha in the dhyāna-mudrā. The projections on the dexter and sinister have Akshobhya in the bhumisparśa-mudrā and Vairochana in the dharmachakra-mudrā. The mukuta of the rear face bears the figure of Amoghasiddhi with his left palm on the lap and right hand raised. Thus, the image bears on her crowns five Dhyāni-Buddhas as prescribed in the Nishpannayogāvali and Sādhanā nos. 93 and 95. Ratnasambhava who occupies the position immediately above the forehead is evidently intended as the kuleśa. On the forehead of the front face is a flower within an oblong border, above which is an eye-shaped mark. Stylistically, the image is ascribable to the eleventh century A.D. As the image is reduced to a bust and the back-slab is missing, it is not known if the figure of Vajra-Tārā was surrounded by companion goddesses or not.

The complete mandala of Vajra-Tārā is reproduced in a bronze or octo-alloy lotus (III.32) found at Chandipore close to Patharghata District Bhagalpur, Bihar. It may be noted that the adjoining villages of Patharghata like antichak contain extensive remains of a Buddhist establishment which has generally been identified with Vikramaśila-mahāvihāra. The lotus (no. A 24364/4551) is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

When closed, the lotus presents the appearance of a bud (III.32). Over this bud is placed a cap, the finial of which is in the form of a stupa. The bud encloses the central figure of Vajra-Tārā and eight mandala-deities so completely that nothing is visible. When opened, the lotus reveals in the centre the image of the four-faced eight-armed Vajra-Tārā (III.32a) and against the inner face of each petal a goddess—eight in all, alternately in the *vajra-prayankāsana* and ālidha. The outer sides of the petals are numbered anti-clockwise with numerals from 1 to 8 in characters of the tenth-eleventh century A.D.

As already noted, the central figure on the pericarp of the lotus represents Vajra-Tārā (III.32b). She is seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* with slight flexions, the head being somewhat turned towards her left. Lavishly decorated with ornaments including kundalas mentioned in the sādhanās, she is eight-armed, four-faced and twelve-eyed; the front face is smiling. Her uppermost right hand wields a thunderbolt, objects in the remaining three hands being bud-shaped arrows, a noose and a conch-shell (lowest). Her lowest left palm, in the tarjani-mudrā, is near her chest; the second, resting on the knee, bears an elephant-goad; the third carries the stalk of an utpala, and the fourth holds a bow. The attributes in the hands of the goddess are identical with those prescribed in the Nishpanna yogāvali and Sādhanā nos. 93, 97 and 110, though they may not exactly agree with the sādhanā quoted by Foucher.

Before closing the survey of Vajra-Tārā we may notice a few images of this goddess from Nepal and China. These images are being referred to with a specific purpose. As we have noted three kinds of dispositions of attributes in the hands of Vajra-Tārā. Two of these varieties are illustrated by images from Eastern India. In this particular type, which is prescribed in Sādhanā no. 94, the goddess bears a thunderbolt, an arrow, a conch-shell and vara in her right hands and a vajrānkuśa, an utpala, a bow and vajrapāśatarjani in her left hands. This very form is popular in Tibet. Thus, according to A.K. Gordon, the four-headed, eight-armed and twelve-eyed goddess, yellow in colour, presents the vara-mudrā, a thunderbolt, an arrow and a conch-shell in her right hands and an utpala, a bow, an elephant-goad and a noose in her left hands. Among the Tibeto-Chinese bronze statuettes of the Lamaistic pantheon, published by W.E. Clark there is a fine four-headed (face, which is in full view, is three-eyed, image of Ashtabhujā-Vajra-Tārā, wearing kundalas among other ornaments. Seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana*, she wields a thunderbolt with her topmost raised right hand, holds an arrow and a conch-shell in the next two hands and displays the vara-mudrā with her lowest right palm placed on the knee. One of her left palm is near the chest; it holds the stalk of a flower. The next, in the tarjani-mudrā, holds a noose. The remaining two hands carry an elephant-goad and a bow.

The same attributes appear to be in the hands of an image, in relief, seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana*, found at the *Sarasvatisthan* close to the Svayambhu temple at Kathmandu. This particular image looks like five-headed in the published illustration.

Nepal, where Vajra-Tārā is very popular, yielded other varieties of the images of Vajra-Tārā as well. One such image (in gilt copper) of the fifteenth century A.D. is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Bostan. Here, the four-faced deity, wearing ornaments including kundalas is seated in the *vajra paryankāsana.* Of the attributes, only the thunderbolt and the conch-shell in two of the right hands, the utpala and the noose in two of her left hands are visible. Unlike the images noticed above, this image holds the thunderbolt in her lowest right hand placed against the waist.

The photograph of a somewhat similar image, also from Nepal, has been published. Here also the goddess holds the thunderbolt in her lowest right hand, placed against the waist. The next hand bears a conch-shell. The objects in the remaining two right hands are not visible, the uppermost being in the attitude of drawing an arrow. The lowest left hand holds the stalk of an utpala and the second is in the tarjani-mudrā. The objects in the remaining two hands are not distinct; one might be a bow. Wearing kundalas among other ornaments, the goddess is seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* on a viśva-padma. Only one face of the deity is visible in the illustration.

Another variety is presented by a bronze four-headed eight-armed image (Acc. no. 91; housed in the Dacca Museum. The front face presents three eyes. Seated in the *vajra-paryankāsana* on a stylized viśva-padma, the bejewelled goddess with kundalas holds in her right hands a conch-shell, an elephant-goad, an arrow and a thunderbolt (in the uppermost palm) and in the left hands an utpala, a bow and a noose, the lowest (natural) left palm being in the tarjani-mudrā near the chest. Thus, in this image one of the right hands bears the elephant-goad instead of the noose which is held in the corresponding left hand.

Apart from various emblems and weapons held by her in her multiple saumya and raudra aspects, Tārā, in her different forms, assumed all the five sacred colours associated with the five Dhyāni-Buddhas and five cosmic elements. Normally, she is green, the colour symbolizing youthful vigour and activities, she being essentially of the karma family. The idea of her having different colours took a shape as early as the eighth century A D., as may be gathered from the Ārya-Tārā-sragdharā-stotra composed by Sarvajnamitra.

लाक्षा-सिन्दूर-रागारूणतरकिरणादित्यलौहित्यमेके, श्रीमत्सान्द्रेन्द्र नीलोत्पलदलदलितक्षोदनीलम् तथान्ये। क्षीराब्धिक्षुब्धदुग्धाधिकतरधवलम् कांचनाभं च केचित्, त्वद्रूपं विश्वरूपं स्फटिकवद् उपाध्युक्तिभेदाद् विभिन्नम् ।

'Some have a vision of you (Tārā) as red as the sun with rays more brilliant and red than the lac and the vermilion. Others see you blue like the sapphire. Some again see you whiter than the milk churned out of the milky ocean. Still others see you golden. Your viśva-rupa is like a crystal which changes its colour with the change of the things around it.'

The sādhanās are very particular in stipulating the colour of the deities visualized. Painters of images followed scrupulously the prescription of the sādhanās, as colours are prescribed with a definite plan. Though the stone and bronze images from Eastern India have not preserved the colour, it is very likely that these were painted originally. To the Buddhists the symbolism of colour is of great import, as the colour is intended not only to unfold the nature of the deity represented but to indicate the functions to be performed by the deity in that particular colour. Thus, the green colour signifies youthful vigour, freshness, activity and divine energy, the white perfect purity, peace, knowledge and transcendental wisdom, the red attachment (rāga), love and tejas, the yellow bliss and prosperity and the blue rage and fierceness. The word krishna, sometimes found in the texts, generaliy carries the sense of the dark blue or indigo blue instead of the black. In connexion with the symbolic meaning of the colours, the significant observation of Benoytosh Bhattacharya is worth quoting 'Colours are used in the paintings under a definite mystic scheme. base on the psychic experiences of the sādhaka. The white colour, for instance, is the colour of Vairocana with the Dharmacakra mudrā and represents pure knowledge, divine inspiration and transcendental wisdom. The red colour is that of Amitābha and represents Dhyāna, meditation, contemplation and introspection in order to remove the dirt of attachment. The yeltow colour is that of Ratnasambhava with the Varada mudrā and stands for serenity, divine bliss and happiness. The green colour is that of Amoghasiddhi with the Abhaya mudrā and stands for protection, divine favour, compassion and freedom from dangers of any kind. The blue colour of Aksobhya with the earth-touching mudrā means the destruction of enemies like untruth, sin, attachment, etc., and the final triumph of truth.'

Tārā is also found to be visualized and represented practically in all the postures. Again, a deep significance is attached to the āsanas as well. Thus, the *vajra-paryankāsana* indicates deep meditation and introspectation; the lalitāsana and ardha-paryankāsana signify beautitude and serenity; the mahārājalilā denotes princely ease; the bhadrāsana signifies sovereignty; the alidha-pāda symbolizes heroism and tejas; the pratyālidha-pāda stands for fierceness and destructive mood, and the dancing in the ardha-paryanka pose represents rage and triumphant pleasure after vanquishing the Evil Ones, The goddess is represented, though very rarely as in one of the miniatures of the manuscript no. Add. 1643 of the Cambridge University Library.

Tārā in general:

In the Mahayanic pantheon we may observe, besides the various dhyāni buddhas and bodhisattvas, their energies or Śaktis, represented as female beings, the Tārās. They have the appearance of princesses, with their hair done up in a tall wreath and ornamented with a diadem, and further wearing ear-rings, cords across their breast, and rings on their arms, wrists, and ankles. The upper part of the body is bare, the lower part is covered by a cloth, held in place by a handsomely ornamented girdle. The type as a whole bears great resemblance to Laksmi or Śri, the wife of Viṣṇu, and representative of the ideal type of queen.

Dress and ornaments resemble those of the bodhisattvas to such a degree, that it is often hard to make out whether a certain figure is a bodhisattva or a Tārā. This is made even more difficult by the Indian ideal of beauty, which tends to make all forms rounded. It is not easy to mention a definite distinguishing mark, especially one that could class a figure as a bodhisattva. The identification of a Tārā is sometimes made easy by the figure's prominent breasts and the typical form of the female breastcards.

The Tārās are usually seated on a lotus throne, with the right leg hanging down, the foot being supported by a little cushion. The right hand rests on the right knee in a special pose, the left is raised before the breast in vitarkamudrā, holding the stalk of a lotus, the flower of which is visible beside the left shoulder. Sometimes this flower bears the attribute by which the Tārā can be recognized. The pecularity particularly applies to the fixed group of Tārās who belong to the dhyāni-buddhas. They may be summarized as follows:

direction	Dhyāni-buddha	Tārā	colour	symbol
centre	Vairocana	Vajradhātvisvari	white	cakra
East	Akṣobhya	Locanā	blue	vajra
South	Ratnasambhava	Māmaki	yellow	ratna
West	Amitābha	Pāndarā	pink	padma
North	Amoghasiddha	Śyāma Tārā	green	viśvavajra

The Tibetan thankas show a series of Tārās depicted in the usual manner, with their right hands in abhaya-mudrā, and with the following attributes on the lotus beside their left shoulder: cakra, vajra, conch, wishing-tree, viśvavajra, and umbrella. There is no accordance whatever between their colour and the scheme outlined in the diagram above. In addition there is an obvious bipartition within the group, as there is clearly a difference between the facial expressions: three of the six figures have the normal peaceful expression, while the other three have the fierce, contorted faces of the Śaktis of the mystic buddhas. Among these one has an additional third eye in her forehead. In view of these peculiarities the group can not be identified with certainty.

Much more familiar iconographically are the two Tārās, who mostly occur together, the White Tārā and the Green Tārā. They are said to have been incarnated as the two wives of king Sron-btsan-sgam-po: the White Tārā in the Chinese "princess" Wen-chun, the Green Tārā in the daughter of king Amśuvarman of Nepal. Attempts have been made to find a connection between the colour of the Tārās and the complexion of the two princesses, but it is highly improbable that actually any such connection should have existed.

The Green Tārā entirely conforms to the described type; her right hand rests on her right knee in varamudrā, and holds a second lotus, which rises up beside her right shoulder. On unpainted bronzes the presence of the two lotusses is one of her most easily recognizable distinguishing features. The White Tārā can readily be identified by two other characteristics. In the first place, she is never seated with one leg hanging down, but always with both legs doubled under her body. Secondly, she has seven eyes, i.e. apart from the normal pair of eyes, and a third one in her forehead, she also has eyes in the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet. This peculiarity is unmistakable. Both the Tārās are extremely popular in art, and both frequently occur as bronzes. Together they often have a place as subsidiary figures on thankas occupying corresponding positions on either side of the main figure.

There is another group of Tārās that repeatedly occur on thankas, namely the twenty-one Tārās, who may either be assembled on one painting, or distributed over 21 paintings of similar type. At present we are particularly interested in the 21 Tārās, who are all shown holding a jewel-vase in the palm of their right hand. The leading personage of the group is depicted in the centre of the painting: she is seated, with a blue lotus by her right shoulder, while the minor figures surrounding her all have the usual lotus on their left. Of greater importance is the fact that all figures are not only named, but also numbered. The numbering commences with the central figure, then passes to the figures in the lower half, and finally proceeds upwards on both sides of the painting, so that the even numbers are to the right and the odd numbers to the left of the main figure. This proves that the distribution of the figures over the painting was subjected to a certain system. On closer inspection a second peculiarity strikes us, viz. that here again the facial expressions show marked variations. There appear to be three types, one with wide open eyes and slightly opened mouth, what gives the impression of contortion [central figure and six others], wide open eyes and closed mouth [nine figures], and the familiar type with almond-shaped eyes and closed mouth [the remaining five]. In the first group there is one figure who is in addition characterized by a third eye in her forehead and rather heavier eyebrows. This is Bhrkuti, the "Tārā with the frowning brows". With Bhrkuti we arrive at a group of goddesses who are reckoned as Tārās, but differ in appearance from the forms mentioned so far, by having many arms, and sometimes also demonic features.

Tārā in Hindu Tantras

Brahmanical mythology knows of several Tārās, but here we are concerned with the goddess of this name who is known as the second Mahāvidyā and is sometimes called Dvitīyā or the Second; Kālī being known as Adyā or the First. Her dhyāna is given in several tantra works. Her chief forms are three, namely, Ekajaṭā, Nīlasarasvatī and Ugrā, although several others are mentioned under various names. These designations do not mean distinct divinities. On the contrary, they indicate only the particular aspects of the deity which the votary has in view, the devatā being one and the same throughout. This is the case not only with Tārā but with other gods and goddesses as well, whether they be old or new, a fact which was recognised long ago by Yāska, the well-known etymologist of ancient India who in his comments on the Nighaṇṭu or the Nirukta said :

'प्रत्यक्षद्दश्यमेतद्भवति माहाभाग्याद्देवताया एक एव आत्मा बहुधा स्तूयते'

'We see actually that because of the greatness of a devatā or deity the one principle of life, i.e. the deity, is praised in different ways.' This oneness of a devatā is recognised by the Tantras also. For instance, the Tārā tantra, while speaking of the bhedas or various forms of Tārā, clearly says that the great goddess is but one and she is threefold in name only.

एकैव हि महादेवी नाममात्रं त्रिधा भवेत् ।

But in the present case this oneness or ekatva, it seems to me, indicates rather the absorption of several originally diverse but similar cults into the one cult of Tārā. The cult of Tārā being so popular that it absorbed other cults of like nature with the result that the divinities of those cults merged into Tārā and their appellations became synonyms of her name.

The appellation of Ekajaṭā is given because of her one chignon. She is called Nīlā or Nīlasarasvatī because of her blue colour and her being an embodiment of wisdom. She is fierce, or she saves from dire calamity, and is consequently known as Ugrā 'उग्रापत्तारिणी यस्मांत्. Taking the various representations or dhyānas of Tārā as found in works like Tārā rahasya, Tārā tantra, Tantrasāra, Mantra mahodadhi and others. It seems that she is primarily a saviouress, either riding a corpse lying on a lotus, or standing in the attitude of an archer (the pratyālīḍha pose), is generally of blue colour, bears Akshobhya in her head-dress, and holds a lotus in her hand besides various ornaments and emblems.

References in Brahmanical literature :

In the praise or stuti of the goddess Durgā by Yudhishthira, the eldest Pāṇḍava, which occurs in the great epic, the Mahābhārata, we find that the goddess is extolled by the name of Tāriṇī. Tārā and Tāriṇī are identical terms both signifying 'तरत्यनया' 'saviour', i.e., the goddess who enables one to swim across the waters of tribulation. But it is very doubtful if the Tariṇī of the Mahābhārata is identical with the Tārā of the Tantras. It is true that the Tantras also make Tārā one of the forms of Pārvatī or the divine śakti, but that is only an attempt towards the Vedāntic notion which we find fully developed in expressions like 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म'. This is clear from the following verses, which we find in the Mahānirvāṇa-tantra :—

इति देव्या वचः श्रुत्वा देवदेवो महेश्वरः ।
उवाच परया प्रीत्या पार्वतीं पार्वतीपतिः ।।[1]

... ...

त्वमाद्या सर्वविद्यानामस्माकमपि जन्मभूः ।
त्वं जानासि जगत्सर्वं न त्वां जानाति कश्चन ।।
त्वं काली तारिणी दुर्गा षोडशी भुवनेश्वरी ।
धूमावती त्वं बगला भैरवी छिन्नमस्तका ।।
त्वमन्नपूर्णा वाग्देवी त्वं देवी कमलालया ।
सर्वशक्तिस्वरूपा त्वं सर्वदेवमयी तनुः ।।

"The great Lord, the god of gods and lord of Pārvatī, on hearing these words thus addressed Pārvatī with great affection......You are the origin of all the sciences, you are the origin of us all as well. You know the universe but none comprehends you. You are Kālī. You are Tāriṇī, Durgā, Shoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā, Bhairavī, and Chhinnamastakā. You are Annapūrṇā and the goddess of speech and you are Lakshmī (who resides in the lotus). You are the embodiment of all energy and your body is made up of all the gods."

Here the cult of the Mahāvidyās is fully developed and evidently this tantra is posterior to the Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa and a fortiori to the Mahābhārata eulogy of the goddess Durgā. The fact of the stotra being vague as compared to the description in this tantra shows the former to be earlier. Prof. M. Winternitz, "has found that the best manuscripts of the Virāṭaparvan do not contain the Durgāstotra at all." Consequently it has to be treated as a later addition.

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[1] 4th Ullāsa, sts 8th, 12-14.

The tāntrika cult of the Mahāvidyās does not appear to be very old. We are not aware that it is known to the eighteen principal Purāṇas. The Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa in its Lalitopākhyāna not only alludes to her but fully describes the goddess Tārā as a distinct divinity,

'तारा नाम महाशक्तिः'[1]

but she is not the Mahāvidyā. In the description, she is called Tārāmbā, or 'Tārā the mother' like her Mongolian name 'Dara-eke' and is represented as the chief of the countless śaktis or nāyikas. Besides this name, we find several appellations in this eulogy which seem to indicate distinct divinities, e.g., Kālī, Chaṇḍī or Sarasvatī. Apparently then, Tāriṇī also designates a distinct divinity. But when we remember that the traits mentioned in this stotra are not uncommon to other divinities, we are constrained to wonder whether Tārā as conceived in later Tāntrika works, i.e., as the second Mahāuidyā, was at all in the view of the composer of this eulogy of Durgā, the devatā of this hymn, as we find her described in the Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa, which is one of the chief books of the Śāktas, as the female principle in the universe. She is the embodiment of the tejas or energy of the gods, the other goddesses being regarded as her forms or rūpas only:—

"...देवानां शक्रादीनां शरीरतः ।
निर्गतं सुमहत्तेजस्तच्चैक्यं समगच्छत ।
ततस्समस्तदेवानां तेजोराशिःसमुद्भवाम्..."[2]

This might be an attempt towards monotheism, but it is doubtful if the highly developed cult of the Daśa mahāvidyās was at all known to the author of this Purāṇa, far less to the author of the above-mentioned eulogy in the great epic. In the tantra works we find these vidyās to be ten, whereas in this Purāṇa, the Mahāvidyā is only one as is clear from the following verses:—

'महाविद्या महामाया महामेधा महास्मृतिः ॥
महामोहा च भवति महादेवी महासुरी ।
महारात्रि! महाविद्ये! नारायणि! नमोस्तुते ॥'[3]

From what has been remarked above, it can be inferred that the goddess Tārā was Buddhist originally. We have already know that this goddess is practically unknown to the

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1. Brahmāṇda P. Chap. 31, st. 12.
2. Markandeya P. Ch. 82-10-18,
3. Ibid Chap. 81, st. 5. Chap. 91, st. 20.

earlier Brahmanical books where if any distinct personality is mentioned under the name of Tārā it seems to be more Buddhist than Brahmanical. The tantras themselves show that the cult of Tārā must have been Buddhist in origin or in other words, the Brahmanical mythology took it from the Buddhist pantheon. They admit that it is by chīnāchāra, i.e., the Chinese mode of worship or the Mahāyāna rites that Tārā is to be propitiated. This chīnāchāra is highly praised and described at length in the works like the Nīlatantra[1] and is mentioned in the Tārā-rahasya-vṛittikā of Śaṅkarāchārya, the son of Kamalākara and grandson of Lambodara. The legend of Buddha and Vasishtha is given not trolling the navigation in 'the lake of nectar' or 'Amṛitavāpi' who can suppress the flooded waters :

तासां नौकावाहिकानां शक्तीनां श्यामलत्विषाम् ।
प्रधानभूता तारांबा जलौघशमनक्षमा ॥[2]

"Tārā, the mother, who can control the rush of waters, is the chief of those śaktis who navigate or guide the boats and have dark complexion." This Tārā though not yet the second Mahāvidyā of the tantras is, her prototype. As this is a highly interesting reference with very strong bearing on this thesis, we quote the text containing the description of the deity and give a rendering thereof :—

मनोनाम महाशालः . . .   .
तन्मध्यकक्ष्याभागस्तु सर्वाप्यमृतवापिका ।
न तत्र गन्तुं मार्गोऽस्ति नौकावाहनमन्तरा ॥
तारानाम महाशक्तिर्वर्त्तते तोरणेश्वरी ।
बह्वयस्तत्रोत्पलश्यामास्तारायाः परिचारिकाः ॥
रत्ननौकासहस्रेण खेलन्त्यस्सरसीजले ।
अपरं पारमायान्ति पुनर्यान्ति परं तटम् ॥
कोटिशस्तत्र ताराया नाविक्यो नवयौवनाः ।
मुहुर्गायन्ति नृत्यंति देव्याः पुण्यतमं यशः ॥
अरित्रपाणयः काश्चित्काश्चिच्छूगाम्बुपाणयः ।
पिबन्त्यस्तत्सुधातोयं संचरंत्यस्तरीशतैः ॥
तासां नौकावाहिकानां शक्तीनां श्यामलत्विषाम् ।
प्रधानभूता ताराम्बा जलौघशमनक्षमा ॥
आज्ञां विना तयोस्तारा मंत्रिणीदण्डनाथयोः ।
त्रिनेत्रस्यापि नोदत्ते वापिकाम्भसि सान्तरम् ॥
तारातरणिशक्तीनां समवायोऽतिसुन्दरः ।

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1. Nila tantra Chapter 15th of the Varendra Research Society which is dated 1626 of the Śaka era.
2. Ibid. st. 17.

इत्थं विचित्ररूपाभिनौंकाभिः परिवेष्टिता ॥
तारांबा महतीं नौकामधिगम्य विराजते ॥[3]

"There is a great hall called 'manas' whose middle enclosure comprises the nectar-lake. There is no way to go into it save the conveyance of a boat. There is the great śakti, Tārā by name, who controls the gate. There are many attendants of Tārā who are dark like the blue lotus and are sporting in the waters of the lake with thousands of boats of jewels. They come to this shore and go back to the other shore. There are millions of boat-women under Tārā who are in the prime of youth. They dance and sing the most sacred fame of the goddess. Some hold oars and others conches in their hands. They are drinking the nectar-water (of the lake) and going hither and thither on hundreds of those boats. Of these śaktis who guide the boats and have dark colour the chief one is Tārā, the mother who can calm the floods. Without the permission of Mantriṇī and Daṇḍanātha, Tārā does not allow even Śiva to come in the waters of the Vāpikā or lake. The union of Tārā and the 'Powers controlling the boats' (tāraṇi-śakti) is indeed very charming. Thus Tārā, the mother, surrounded by various boats and herself occupying a large boat shines exceedingly."

After this comes the description of Vāruṇī and then of Kurukullā, who like Tārā herself, have their subservient śaktis, occupy bejewelled boats and guard their kakshās or enclosures. Kurukullā is described as follows :—

तयोस्तुशालयोर्मध्ये कक्ष्याभूरखिला मुने ।
विमर्शवापिकानाम सौषुम्णामृतरूपिणी ॥
तत्र नौकेश्वरी देवी कुरुकुल्लेति विश्रुता ।
तमालश्यामलाकारा श्यामकंचुकधारिणी ॥
नौकेश्वरीभिरन्याभिस्स्वसमानाभिरावृता ।
रत्नारित्रकरा नित्यमुल्लसन्मदमांसला ।
परितो भ्राम्यति मुने मणिनौकाधिरोहिणी ॥

"Midway between the two halls there is a lake called Vimarśa where there is the goddess called Kurukullā who controlls over the boats. She is dark like the Tamāla tree and wears a dark bodice. She is surrounded by other mistresses of boats who are also like her. She holds an oar of jewels in her hands and is powerful owing to her ever-increasing intoxication, or exhilaration. She moves all around, O Sage ! occupying the boat of jewels."

That Tārā of the tantras was not known to the earlier Brahmanical literature will be best evidenced by the Agni-Purāṇa for, while describing the images of the devīs or goddesses, it mentions Tārā only as a Yoginī. When enumerating the sixty-four yoginīs it names two,

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1. Ibid Chap. 31. 12-18, 21-23.

namely, Akshobhyā and Sarvajñā, which cannot fail to remind us of Buddha; Buddha the unperturbed or calm, and Buddha the omniscient. Akshobhyā we know is one of the Dhyāni Buddhas and Sarvajñā is one of the recognized names of Buddha[1]. This Tārā and the Tārā of the Mayadīpikā, referred to elsewhere[2], are evidently one, but Tārā of the Mahāvidyās, is different. Besides, the Yoginīs are of a far lower status than of a devatā, though they are worshipped at every auspicious occasion. Tārā of the Lalitopākhyāna of the Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa is not a vidyā possibly. The Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa is as one of the earlier Purāṇas for, as pointed out by the geneology of the kings given in it stops with the Imperial Guptas and their contemporaries, which could not have been the case had the Purāṇa been composed after the fifth century A.D.

The next reference to Tārā in a work which, strictly speaking, may hardly be termed tāntrika is perhaps in the Laghustuti 'the little or short eulogy,' a good edition of which with the commentary of Rāghavānanda has been brought out by M.M. Ganapati Sastri of Trivandrum. This beautiful little poem was, according to the commentator Rāghavānanda, composed by an author who was called Laghubhaṭṭāraka. The name Laghubhaṭṭāraka, however, seems to me to be more like a popular name than a real name and a reference to the last stanza of the poem would suggest that it was taken by the author in consideration of his 'laghutvaṁ' or smallness evidently out of modesty. We do not think the work is earlier than the seventh or eighth century A.D.

In the Brahmanical tantra works, Tārā is well known and is one of the chief divinities if not the principal one. In some cases, she is regarded as unequalled in so far as she is 'quick in granting boons' or success

"नैव तारासमा काचिद्देवता सिद्धिदायिनी'.

The Brahmanical tantra-books do not appear to be very old. Perhaps they do not go back than the 6th century A.D. and owing to this reason, Tārā, as represented in them, is not to be found in older literature. How she is described in these Tantras we shall see presently.

The inscriptions known to us do not mention the Brahmanical Tārā though they speak of Tārā the Buddhist divinity. The earliest mention of the Buddhist Tārā in an epigraphical document, is in the Nāgarī inscription of Java which is dated in the Śaka year 700 (AD. 778). The next in date is the Chālukyan inscription of the reign of Tribhuvanamalla Vikramāditya, VI, whose reign began in the Śaka year 1017, i.e. 1095-96 A.D.

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[1] Cf. Amarakosha 1. 13.

[2] Memoir No. XI, p. 3.

Tārā is a very important and popular deity in the tantra literature current in Northern India. According to the Samayāchāratantra she belongs to the Uttarāmnāya or the sacred texts of the north. It is owing to this fact that she is not so well known in Southern India. Tradition, recorded in the Epigraphia Indica, would indicate that she was not known there before the 8th century. It says that during the reign of king Himaśītala of Kāñchī (cir. 8th century A.D.) there arose a serious quarrel for supremacy, between the Jains and the Buddhists. The latter wanted to establish themselves in Southern India but were overcome together with their goddess Tārā who had then secretly descended into a pot, by the Jain teacher Akalaṅkadeva at Kāñchī. Rao Bahadur H. Krishna Sastri tells that it is rumoured that the goddess at Kāñchī, called Kāmākshī, is worshipped on certain days in the week with all the ritual of Śāktism, much condemned by the Brahmans, and it is not improbable that the goddess Kāmākshī is the Buddhist goddess Tārā. That Tārā never gained ground in the south is further evidenced by the Tatvanidhi, a very useful collection of highly interesting quotations from various works and utterances by famous persons or authors bearing on the Hindu pantheon, which was compiled by Śrī Mummadi Krishnarāja Odaya, the ruler of Mysore. It gives a dhyāna of Ugra-Tārā but instead of naming any authority simply says āmnāye "in the sacred texts." This will show that the author of the work and his group of learned pandits,

'प्राचीननिबन्धसारसमुद्धरणचञ्चुपण्डितसहस्र'—

were not quite familiar with the books or tantras bearing on the cult of the goddess and this could not have been the case had she been a popular divinity in the south. The Uttarāmnāya seems to be hardly known there even in these days. The late Mr. Gopi Nath Rao in his learned book on Hindu iconography, which was based on the principal āgamas known in the south, leaves out Tārā altogether !

Tārā is perhaps known to all the chief tantras of the north. The dhyāna of Tārā is given in some of these as well as other tantra works. The description of the goddess in these works, presupposes, apparently, a prototype which, as will be shown later on, was the Buddhist divinity of that name. Leaving aside other considerations this fact alone is a sufficient proof of the late origin of these works. The legend according to which Vasishṭha went to Mahāchīna to learn the mode of worshipping Tārā from Buddha himself as it was not known to anybody else and was different from the Brahmanical method of worshipping gods and goddesses would lead us to the same conclusion. The comparison of the traits in the dhyānas, is shown below.

In the well-known tantra works like the Rudra-yāmala or the Brahma-yāmala and some of the tāntric treatises, like the Tārārahasya-vṛttikā, call Tārā as Prajñāpāramitā, which is decidedly a Buddhist appellation.[1] Besides this, the fact that Akshobhya, is placed on her head will lend a very strong support to the hypothesis that Tārā had a Buddhist origin. The term Akshobhya 'the unmovable' as an attribute may be applied to Śiva or to any other Brahmanical god. But it is not a familiar name in the Hindu mythology. On the other hand, it is very common in Buddhism or Mahāyānism. The Hīnayāna also knows it as an epithet of Buddha. In the tantras, for example the Ṭoḍalatantra, we find that Śiva is called 'Akshobhya' and Tārini is his wife :—

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[1] Cf. A.K. Maitra, Introduction to Tārātantram.

समुद्रमथने देवी ! कालकूटं समुत्थितम् ।
सर्वे देवाश्च देव्यश्च महाक्षोभमवाप्नुयुः ॥
क्षोभादिरहितं यस्मात् पीतं हालाहलं विषम् ।
शिव एव महेशानि ! अक्षोभ्यः परिकीर्त्तितः ॥
तेन सार्द्धं महामाया तारिणी रमते सदा ।[1]

'At the time when the ocean was churned there arose a deadly poison, O Goddess ! and all the gods and goddesses felt very much disturbed. But as Śiva drank the deadly poison without any tremor, therefore, O Goddess ! he is called Akshobhya and with him Mahāmāyā 'the great Illusion' Tāriṇī always enjoys herself.'

In the Śivaśaktisaṅgamatantra, Akshobhya is put down as a synonym of Śiva and Tārā a synonym of Śakti, for it sometimes gives इति उत्तरतंत्रे अक्षोभ्यतारासंवादे in place of 'शिवशक्तिसंवादे'. In the portion dealing with Tārā herself this tantra expressly says that it is by the Ċhīnāchāra-krama or the Chinese mode of worship only that Tārā can be propitiated. That the Brahmans adopted this mode is clearly shown by this book, for it says-

महाचीनक्रमो देवि द्विविध परिकीर्त्तितः ।
सकलो निष्कलश्चेति सकलो बौद्धगोचरः ॥
निष्कलो ब्राह्मणानां च—

'The Mahāchīna mode, O Goddess ! is twofold, namely, sakala and nishkala. The former is familiar with the Buddhists and the latter with the Brahmans. In the Sakala system there is no regard for शौच or 'cleanliness' (नात्र शुद्धेरपेक्षास्ति) or for bathing (किं स्नानं कस्य वा स्नानं- 'what is the use of bathing or who is to be bathed?). As this idea is averse to Brahmanism, the Brahmanas naturally had to modify the system according to their propensities or temperament and the āchāra in the Brahmanic garb was called 'nishkala'.

Akshobhya is, therefore, Śiva in the tantra and Śiva, we know, is Avalokiteśvara in the Mahāyāna pantheon, with Tārā as his recognized Śakti. That the Śakti of Śiva is called Tārā we have just seen in the Śivaśaktisaṅgamatantra. That Akshobhya is the seer or Rishi of the mantra of Tārā, though, apparently, a Brahmanic idea, is quite in the fitness of things a Buddhist feature : Akshobhya is Buddha and Tārā is Prajñāpāramitā or the highest knowledge revealed to him—he indeed is the veritable seer or Rishi who got the bodhi or enlightenment while sitting in the 'adamantine posture' unmoved and undaunted by the hosts of Māra, the Evil Spirit.

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[1] Toḍalatantra, quoted in the Tārātantra (Gaudagranthamāla text, p. 10).

Now the question which presents itself for solution is where did Tārā originate in India or outside India ? What has been stated above about the fate of the goddess in Southern India precludes the possibility of her having a South-Indian origin. The Tantras call her northern or a deity of the Uttarāmnāya thus showing that she originated in the north. Let us see which tract gave birth to her. The Sādhanamālā as quoted by M. Foucher would show that Nāgārjuna revived the worship of Ekajaṭā, a principal form of the goddess, amongst the Bhoṭas or the country of Tibet, for it says :—

एकजटासाधनं समाप्तम्-आर्यनागार्ज्जुन-पादैर्भोटेषूद्धृता इति ।

meaning 'The end of the manual of worship of Ekajatā—Ekajatā was revived in the Bhotas or the country of Tibet by the Rev. Nāgārjuna.' This revival (or uddhāra) would, obviously, imply that the worship of the goddess had already existed in Tibet — the people there had given it up and it was again raised or resuscitated by Nāgārjuna like the Aśvamedha sacrifice, which, as we learn from numismatic or epigraphical evidences, was resuscitated by Samudragupta, the Napoleon of India. How far are we to rely on this statement of the Sādhanā we shall see presently. In any case it confirms the view that Tārā worship originated in the North.

The Buddha-Vasishtha legend alluded to above would show that her worship was brought from the country of Chīna or Mahāchīna where the seer Vasishtha was sent by Brahman, his father, to learn it, evidently because it was not known in India. The identity of the sage does not matter much. He might be a man of the gotra of Vasishtha, but the country called Chīna-deśa or Mahāchīna in the tantras does not appear to have been identical with China. The Mahābhārata, the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya, the dramas of Kālidāsa and other texts would all point towards China, which exported the classical Chīnāṁśuka, as the Chīna-deśa. But the tantras like the Rudra-yāmala would make us locate the country nearer home close to the great Himalaya. The following verse of this Tantra quoted in the Tārātantra would show that it lay by the side of Himalaya.

ततो गत्वा महाचीनदेशे ज्ञानमयो मुनिः ।
ददर्श हिमवत्पार्श्वे साधकेश्वरसेविते ॥

This condition, however, is not fulfilled in the case of China proper. That we have to look to the other side of the mountain is suggested by the Brahma-yāmala, which says that Vasishtha first repaired to the Kāmākhyā hills or Assam and practised austerities there.

Failing to propitiate the goddess he had to proceed to Chīna-deśa. It would apper that the term Chīna or Mahāchịna was used comprehensively to include the country bordering on the northern side of the great snowy mountain, especially Tibet. China is known for her silks and the Chīnāṁśuka did come from China proper. But the term Chīna-deśa or Mahā-chīna of the tantras designates the great Chinese Empire which included, as it does even now, the countries called Tibet and Eastern Turkistan as its dependencies. Vasishtha proceeded to that part of Mahāchīna which lay by the side of Himālaya and which was probably identical with Tibet where Tārā is very popular even now while her worship is practically unknown in China proper. Tibetan Lamas, we know, worship their deities by the tāntric rites.

CHAPTER THREE

Popularity of Tārā Goddess

(i) TĀRĀ IN INDIAN STATES

A good number of sculptural representations testifying to the popularity of the Buddhist goddess Tārā are found in the caves of Western Deccan, such as Ellora, Aurangabad, Kanheri, Nasik and other places and also at Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh, but very few of them can be chronologically assigned to a period earlier than the sixth century A.D. In the subsequent history of Buddhism, this goddess assumed numerous forms, and some of the varieties occur in sculptures, in stone and bronze, conforming to the dhyānas, at Nālandā, Bodhgaya, Kurkihar, various localities of Bengal and Orissa, Amaravati and Nagapattinam. Images of Khadirvani Tārā, also known as Syāmatārā, have been recovered from different sites of India. A beautiful statuette in the Baroda Museum shows the goddess in the lalita attitude. The Indian Museum of Calcutta has a few interesting standing figures of this goddess. The one from Mahoba is in a seated cross-legged posture. In the extant medieval representations of this variety of Tārā, sometimes curious miniature figures of eight goddesses or eight illustrative scenes are found carved on the prabhāvali or either side of the principal deity. One such image in the collection of the Dacca Museum shows this feature. On an image of Tārā, originally, hailing from Ratnagiri in Cuttack, district Orissa, we find other features which collectively stand for the 'eight great fears' from which she saves her devotees. In the Patna Museum, there are a few bronze and stone images of this goddess. The entire bronze collection of the Kurkihar hoard belong to Patna Museum. The Nālandā bronzes are mainly in the Indian Museum of Calcutta, and partly in the Patna and the museum of Nālandā. In many cases, these metal images are inscribed. In one of the dvibhanga or slight bend position. In another, she stands with the female attendants carrying camara, breast decorated with creeper designs incised. A third variety shows her eight-armed, wearing a high jatāmukuta, and seated in a slight bhanga pose. The fourth one is Syāmatārā, a seated figure with lotus stalk in the left hand. This type is more frequent. From Kurkihar figurines, at least one of Sitatārā can be identified. Metal images from Nālandā include a figure on Dhanada-tārā, seated cross-legged, four-armed, the right upper of which holds a rosary, lower in the vaiada pose, while the upper left holds a lotus and the lower a cup-like object. It belongs to 10th century A.D. Of the stone images of the Patna Museum, a few of the Pala period are fragmentary. A complete figure of Khadiravāni Tārā, hailing from Hilsa, near Patna, shows the goddess in lalitāsana. The right hand with varada-mudrā rests on the right knee and the left hand holds a lotus. She is accompanied by Ekajatā and Aśokakāntā Mārici. Two images of the same goddess from Orissa have been presented, in one of which, she is seated with her right leg pendant on a great lotus, while in another she is accompanied by the aforesaid deities and seated in lalitāsana. She has her hair dressed in a low chignon, is clad with uttariya and loin cloth and wears full and delicate jewellery. All these Tārā images can be collectively dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries.

In an Indian Museum statuettee of Mahāśrī Tārā, she is shown as one-faced and two-armed, exhibiting the vyākhyāna or dharmacakra mudrā. To her left is Ekajatā sitting in the ardhaparyanka attitude. To her right sits Aśokakāntā Mārici who wears a jewelled crown and carries the vajra and aśoka flower. The statuete also depicts Jānguli towards the extreme left of the deity and a small figure of Mahāmāyuri to the extreme right. This Indian Museum image seems to be the only image representing Mahāśrī Tārā, where the sculpture is in complete accordance with the description found in the iconological texts. Images of Vajratārā are found almost everywhere in India. She is also popular in Nepal. In the Chinese collection of statuettes of Peiping, an image of Vajratārā is found under the title Aṣṭabhujā Vajratārā. This goddess should be, according to the iconological description, eight-armed and four-faced and in the midst of the circle of Eight Mothers. The Indian Museum bronze of Vajratārā from Patharghata is in the form of a lotus, and represents the complete mandala or circle with all the attendant deities. The petals are eight in number, each bearing the image of an attendant deity. An Orissan image of this goddess has been recovered from Mayurbhanj which is four-faced and eight-armed. The four right hands contain vajra, noose, arrow and conch and the four left lotus, bow, goad and raised tarjani. A similar image of the goddess has been found at Sarasvatisthāna close to the Svayambhu temple in Nepal. A beautiful Tārā image belonging to 11th century, recovered from Jajpur, now in the Orissa State Museum, presents the goddess as seated in rajalilāsana, showing vyākhyāna mudrā in right hand and a lotus stalk in the left. The Banpur hoard contains eleven bronze images of Tārā in lalitāsana carrying lotus in left hand and exhibiting varada-mudrā in the right. The ornamentations show anklets on the feet, bracelets in the hand, necklace in neck and tapering mukutas on the crest. Stylistically these images may be compared to the Tārā images of Ratnagiri, Jairampur, Jajpur and other places of Orissa. From the ruins of the Somapara monastery, i.e., Paharpur in North bengal, more than fifty terracotta plaques have been discovered which contain eight-armed images of Tārā.

The cult of Tārā, in her various forms, was strong in Eastern India. She is sometimes described in the sādhanas as being of tarrific appearance, four-armed, standing in the pratyālidha pose on a corpse, and holding a sword, a chopper, a lotus and a skull in her hands and a miniature figure of Akṣobhya within the crown of chignon (ekajatā) on hei head.

The iconological trait of ekajatā of Tārā gave rise to the conception of the goddes Ekajatā, and the cult of this new goddess became popular in Bhota (Tibet). According to tradition, Arya Nagārjuna recovered the Ekajatā cult from Bhota. Images of Ekajatā are found in almost all Buddhist countries of the North. She is known in Tibet as well as in China. Iconologically, she is of blue colour, with one face and three eyes, having a tiger-skin round her loin and brown hair piled upwards on her and. She may be two, four or eight-armed. The Indian Museum collection has her two-armed images, each one holding the kartari and the karota (skull-cup) in the hands respectively.

Bhṛkuti, often regarded as a form of Tārā, is conceived as four-armed, one-faced and yellow in colour, three-eyed, and showing varada mudrā and rosary in two right hands and tridandi and kamandalu in two left. Cave No. 10 of Ellora contains an image of this goddess which may be assigned to 7th century A.D. A four-armed Bhṛkuti has been recovered from Salihundan in Andhra Pradesh. A four-armed standing bronze image of Bhṛkuti, belonging to the ninth century from Nalanda is preserved in the Patna Museum. Her upper left hand holds the branches of a tree, upper right hand a rosary, lower left hand a kamandalu and lower right an indistinct object. In front of the pedestal are two makaras shown rising towards the deity.

From about the beginning of the Christian era, the popular cults of the Female Principle were gradually becoming the driving force even in the case of the higher religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, etc. In the Gupta age, the ceremonial worship of the images of Viṣṇu, Śiva and the Buddhist and Jain deities, along with their consorts, installed in numerous temples of magnificent proportions, became a very important feature of religious life. The installation of such temples and images being evidently due to the social surplus introduced by the new economic conditions. Buddhism changed qualitatively from the pristine simplicity of an austere moral code to the most complex system of Mahāyāna. The older form of Buddhism lost its hold upon the people giving way to a new movement, the Mahāyāna. The followers of Mahāyana regarded the Buddha as eternal, without origin and decay, and as such beyond any description whatsoever. They indulged in certain speculations regarding the Buddha's body and gave currency to the trikāya conception which was further elaborated with the rise of a regular Mahāyāna pantheon. The latter came into being with five Dhyāni Buddhas, who were said to have issued out of Ādi Buddha (the original Buddha) through contemplation. Each of these Buddhas was associated with a Bodhisattva and a Śakti in the form of a goddess. Of the Bodhisattvas or Buddhas, the cult of Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of compassion, and Manjuśrī, the personification of wisdom, flourished in the Gupta age and survived for so many centuries. The former was associated with the goddess Tārā while the latter with Laksmi or Saraśvati or both. Subsequent Buddhism came under the complete grip of the Tārā Cult.

As a popular religion, Mahāyāna, in the course of its development, had to make compromises with peoples of widely different tastes and intellectual calibre. Heterogeneous elements of faith and customs thus began to crop up in the province of Buddhism. In course of time, elements like the mantras and the dhāranis were introduced in Buddhism. In the Tattvaratnāvali, we find Mahāyānism sub-divided into two schools, viz., Pāramitā-Naya and Mantra-Naya. The Mantra-Naya or Mantra-yāna seems to be the introductory stages of Tantric Buddhism, from which other off-shoots, like Vajrayāna, Kālacakrayāna, Sahajayāna, etc., arose in later times. The philosophy of Tantric Buddhism, as can be reconstructed from the earlier Buddhist Tantric texts like the Manjuśrīmūlakalpa or the Guhyasamāja, may be summarized as follows: The gods and goddesses are the symbols of the Buddhist conceptions of four elements and five constituents of a being. Earth is represented by the goddess Locanā, water by Māmaki, fire by Pāndaravāsini, and air by Tārā while the five constituents of a being are represented by the five Dhyāni Buddhas. Creation is due to the Śakti or female energy of the Ādi Buddha, and as such the adepts should realise that the female sex is the source of all. The Guhyasamāja, while describing the different ceremonies in connection with initiation, mentions Prajnābhiseka or the initiation of the adept with Prajnā or Śakti. The preceptor takes the hand of Śakti, a beautiful woman, and placing it on the hand of the disciple, says that, as Buddhahood is impossible of attainment by any other means, this Vidyā should be accepted and never abandoned in life. The Vidyās were women of flesh and blood, who later on were deified. The Sammoh Tantra gives a list of the Vidyās whose worship was current in different parts of India. Some of these Vidyās were well known names of Buddhist and Brahmanical goddesses.

The goddess Tārā is mentioned in the Manjusrimūlakalpa in her various forms like Bhṛkuti, Locanā, Māmaki, Śveta, Pāndaravāsini, Sutārā, etc. She is described as Vidyārājni who is full of compassion. Tārā is elevated to the position of the highest deity in Mahāpratyangirā dhārani, a fragment of which is found in Central Asia, in which she is described as a goddess of white colour, wearing a garland of vajras and having the figure of Vairocana on her crown. From the seventh century onwards, we find the exuberance of Tārā-stotras (Cf. the Sarangdhara-stotras composed in praise of Tārā, by the eighth century Kashmiri poet Sarvajnamitra) and the goddess is raised to the mothership of all Buddhas. According to the Sammoha Tantra, Nila-sarasvati or Ugratārā was born in a lake called Cola on the Western stde of the Meru which was included in the Chinadesa. P.C. Bagchi suggests that cola is connected with Kul, Kol, the common word for 'lake' which is found in the names of so many lakes to the west of T-ien-shan. We come across five varieties of Tārā, classified according to colour—green, white, yellow, blue and red. Mention has already been made of her iconological varieties, Of other celebrated Buddhist goddesses we have already had the occasion to refer to Parnaśābri, Vasudhārā, Mārici, Vajravārāhi, Prajnāpāramitā, etc.

We have seen that the cult of Tārā was taken up by the Sāktas and she was regarded as one of the ten Mahāvidyas. The presiding deities of the Sākta Ṣatcakra like Dākini, Hākini, Lākini, Rākini, Sākini, etc., owe their origin to the Buddhist conceptions. Buddhist Tantras were translated into Chinese in the eighth and into Tibetan in the ninth century A.D.

A Combodian inscription refers to the fact that the Tantric texts were introduced there from India at the beginning of the ninth century A.D. As regards the Tantric practices, the Guhyasamāja and a few other early texts refer to meat-eating, union with females, and finger poses. Gradually, Tantric ideas associated with the cult of Śakti changed Buddhism to such a great extent that it seemed not to be Buddhism at all. Belief in the efficacy of mantras, maṇḍalas and elements of esoteric practices was firmly established, while the conception of ultimate reality as a duality of Male and Female Principles—Upāya and Prajnā in Buddhism—became the basis of philosophical understanding.

The goddess Tārā became very popular in India and abroad. We find her images in various states of Indian peninsula, the states were Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Maharastra and Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, Himalayan states including Nepal, Bhutan etc. Outside India also, the cult of Tārā was popular in Combodia, Burma, and Ceylon, while Tibbet became strong bace of the cult of Tārā. Now we will see her popularity in the various states of India.

TĀRĀ IN UTTAR PRADESH

Harsa's rule is followed in the north by that of the Gurjara-Pratiharas in the west, and by the Palas in the east, while in the Deccan and the south the Chalukyas are followed by the Rastrakutas and the Pallavas. Buddhism gains sway over Nepal and Tibet and their contribution is readily reflected in the new traits and features of Indian iconography. Tārās and Prajnāpāramitās come to play their vital role in the Buddhist belief, art and iconology. The advent of the Huns and the Gurjaras had already thrown the Brahmanical social order out of joints and the simple religion of the Hindus, was allied to the Vajrayāna cult and brought in mysticism from which the art forms too could not remain immune and unaffected.

Late-Mediaeval period:

This period runs almost parallel to the appearance and consolidation of the Islamic forces in India. But what is important is that since they were not interested in images beyond breaking them, they failed to influence the plastic arts of the land. It must not be supposed, nevertheless, that the zeal for cultivation of arts and the turning out of idols was in any measure damped by this iconoclastic invasion. Instead the number of images multiplied and the exteriors of temples both in the north and south, more in south, became singularly ornate with figures. Temples came to be surrounded with wonderful reliefs of human figures, many a time formed in unrestrained sensuality.

This was the age of the Pala rulers in northern India who had become ardent champions of Buddhism. Buddhism itself had taken long strides and in its Vajrayāna form had come very much closer to the Tantric Śaktism. Both seem to have come to attach great importance in worship and rituals to the feminine deity. Nepal and Tibet evolved a new kind of technique in bronze to portray the endlessly increasing Bodhisattvas and their feminine counterparts. This metallic art, in the wake of which marble had come to be used for making images, was bound to affect the features of the images.

One of the most important of the Buddhist goddesses was Tārā, supposed to have been born of the tears that Avalokiteśvara had shed for the misery of the world. During the development of the latter phase of Buddhism i.e. Vajrayāna, her importance added strength and she was portrayed in numerous forms and colours, green, white, yellow, blue and red. Generally she carries the whight lotus in her left hand and holds her right hand in the varada mudrā.[1] A mediaeval inscription calls her the mistress of the three words, bestowing happiness, whose body is Dharma, mind is full of mercy, intellect is clear, eyes beauteous with friendship and love, hands give peace.[2] Some of Tārā's images bear the figure of Amoghasiddhi on their crown, but not always. And where this trait is missing and the characteristic colour has disappeared, it is difficult to identify her form. In that case only her sitting pose and surrounding companions help her identification.

Some more than thirty images of Tārā in her several varieties of Vajra Tārā, Bhṛkuti Tārā, Ekajatā, Nilatārā, etc. are preserved in the Museum of Sarnath. Some of these indeed are very important. They belong mostly to the later phases of production and are highly conventionalized. B (F) 1 is an image of Tārā-Bhṛkuti standing to front carved out in alto-relievo from a black slab. The treatment, as also the technique, is of the Gupta period which is shown beside other traits. The hair of the goddess is curiously enough partly treated in short spiral curls, similar to those of Buddha images with a fringe of ringlets along the forehead while the rest of the hair is rounded up in a knot with a few locks falling on the left shoulder. An ornate fillet adorns the forehead, besides numerous other conventional ornaments decking the various limbs of the goddess. Her left hand holds a water-pot while the right one is held in the gift-bestowing attitude. Such a figure M. Foucher would characterize as that of Tārā-Bhṛkuti. Bhṛkuti, an emanation of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha, later comes to have yellow colour and four arms showing the varada mudrā and the rosary in the two right hands and carrying the tridandi and the kamandalu in the two left.[3] This earliest representation of Tārā in stone found at Sarnath and finished in Chunar sandstone is a pretty piece of sculpture.

Another image of Tārā, B (F) 2, standing on a lotus, is done in high relief. The figure wears only a lower garment leaving the upper half of the body bare. Her ornaments are lavishly elaborated. The head-dress consists of a five-coned crown set with stones and pearls of which the middle crest presents a miniature headless figure of Dhyāni-Buddha Amoghasiddhi sitting cross-legged in the Abhaya mudrā. To the right of Tārā is her attendant Mārichi, the goddess of dawn, easily recognizable by her thunderbolt and aśoka flower.

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1. B. Bhattacharya– The Indian Buddhist Iconography, p. 306.
2. Buddhist Ins. from Khasia, verse 3, Epigraphica Indica, Vol 18, p. 131.
3. Indian Buddhist Iconography, p. 307.

Ekajatā, in an angry mood, her forehead marked with deep furrows and her belly long (lambodara), flanks her left. The figure is a perfect model of a sculpture finished in accordance with the prescription of the Sādhanā. As a piece of sculptural beauty of form, it is hardly equalled by other such images. It is in the mediaeval style. B (F) 7, a slab of the same museum, relates in relief another figure of Tārā seated in easy posture (lalitāsana) on a lotns-throne like one described before this figure, also holds a blue lotus (nilotpala) in her left hand. The back of the throne consists of horizontal bars supported by a pair of pilasters with bracket-capitals and a pair of rampent *leogryphs* Above are well-designed heads of alligators issuing from foliage. Her circular halo is formed in the shape of a full-blown lotus. But a more interesting piece, from iconographical point of view, is a bust of Vajra Tārā carved in the round with four heads and eight arms. The forehead mark finished in a diamond shape evidently represents the third eye of the goddess's (trinetra). The headgear of the main head has four tiny figures of Dhyāni Buddhas—two of Aksobhya in the earth-touching pose, one of Amitābha in meditation and the fourth in the attitude of preaching, presumably of Vairochana. On the back head is carved the figure of Amoghasiddhi in the abhayamudrā. The piece is mediaeval.[1] B(F) 18, judging from the figurine of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha above her head, represents the principal figure of Raktatārā (Red Tārā). The red lotus flower of her left hand gives this Raktatārā her characteristic variety as against the nilotpala or the blue lotus characterizing the numerous '*Nilatārā*' images of the Sarnath Museum. The Red Tārās were rare and the Sādhanamālā mentions only one viz. its Kurukullā variety. Kurukullā is white when two-armed and red when four, six or eight-armed.[2] This pale buff stone is a product of the Chunar quarry.

The figure of a Nilatārā is exhibited also in the Lucknow Museum where it is numbered. Similarly a double handed Tārā is preserved in Allahabad Municipal Museum. She is seated in the lalitāsana attitude on a lotus seat. Two varieties of the Blue Tārā have been described by Bhattacharya.[3] They are Ekajatā and Mahāchina Tārā, the latter having been wholly incorporated into the Hindu Tantric pantheon.

The fragmentary sculpture, bearing the bust of a four-armed goddess holding a sword in her upper right hand and dagger in her second hand, is probably prajnā-pāramitā[4], despite the absence of her vyākhyānamudrā. Among these Tārā images, one three-eyed and three-faced is that of Usnisavijayā B(F) 48. A figure of Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha is carved on the front of her headdress. This goddess had eight arms according to the Sādhanā[5], although here she is represented as having only six. She is one of the most popular deities of the pantheon and almost every temple in Nepal contains her image. Her most artistic specimen however, is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

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1. Indian Buddhist Iconography, 308.
2. Ibid. p. 309
3. Ibid. p. 309.
4. Catalogue of Sarnath Museum.
5. Sādhanamālā, p. 394.

EKAJATĀ :-

Ekajatā, one of the Blue Tārās,[1] is generally represented as an attendant of Tārā standing on her left. B(F) 38 of the Sarnath Museum is a fragmentary sculpture depicting Ekajatā holding a sword in her hand. Ekajatā has a long abdomen (lambodara). Her forehead is marked with furrows. Her hands bear a sword and a skull. She wears a tiger skin. Her terrible form is of blue colour, has twelve faces and twenty-four arms.[2]

Image 1.—(ht. 3′ 4″, width 1′ 3½″). Image of goddess, probably Tārā-Bhṛkuti standing to the front, in alto-relievo against a back-slab. The backslab is rounded at the top and adorned along the margin with a scalloped and beaded border, as in the Buddha images of the Gupta period. The feet and right hand are wanting and the proper left side of the backslab is much mutilated from the elbow of the figure upwards. The nose and lips are injured The dress of the goddess seems to consist of a simple cloth of the type of 'sāri' which is indicated on the legs by raised lines and covers the whole of the upper body with the exception of the right arm. The ends of the garment falling over the left arm are carefully marked, the hair is, curiously enough, partly treated in short spiral curls similar to those of Buddha images with a frings of ringlets along the forehead; the rest of the hair is done up in a rowdish knot, while some locks are indicated on the left shoulder. The ornaments are large circular ear-rings, a double necklace, a long string of beads, fastened between the breasts, richly studded armlets and bracelets and an elaborate girdle (kānchi) consisting of five strings of beads which are secured in a large circular diamond in the centre. The left hand of the goddess holds a कमण्डलू and the right hand in वरदमुद्रा. She is identified as तारा भृकुटी. The workmanship is very good. The material is chunar sandstone. The breasts are very large and the waist theirin. This is the earliest representation of a goddess found at Sarnath.

Image 2.—(ht. 4′ 8″, width of back-slab 2′ 2½″). Image of goddess Tārā standing, facing on a lotus in high relief and with the stone cut away at the back of the figure. The image is broken across the waist and a large piece is wanting in the proper left side of the back-slab. The nose and ears are damaged. The forearms are missing, but deep circular holes in joints indicate that they were separate pieces joined to the image by metal rods. The right hand was apparently in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā). The left hand held a blue lotus of which the stem still remains in part. A similar plant rises at the proper right side.

Image 3.—(ht. 2′ 6″; width of back-slab 1′ 10″). Image standing with the right hip thrust out and upper body inclined to the left. Head, forearms and feet missing, also upper part of the back-slab. The right hand was apparently in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā), and the left held a flower of which the stem still remains. The image may perhaps be identified as Tārā. The attendent female figures, one on either side of her, are too much defaced to allow of identification. The style is mediaeval and it is made of chunar stone.

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[1] Indian Buddhist Iconography, p. 309.

[2] Ibid.

Image 4—(ht. 2′ 7¼″, width of back-slab 1′ 11″). Figure of a goddess seated to proper right in Indian fashion with the right foot swung over the left thigh. The head, left arm and right forearms are broken off and the right leg is damaged below the knee. The latter was fastened to the waist by a broad band. The hair hangs down the back almost to the ground. She wears the ornaments similar to those in No. 2. To the upper left of the goddess is a flower stalk, but as the flower itself is broken off, it does not help us to identify the image found in 1906 of mediaeval period.

Image 6.—(ht. 1′ 10″; width 1′ 4½″). Figure of a goddess in alto-relievo projecting from a rectangular back-slab of the same type as No. 4 and 5. Head, both arms and right leg broken off. Near her right shoulder is a miniature elephant in fragmentary condition apparently standing on a lotus. Traces of a similar figure exist on the other side. Is the Goddess Srī or Lakṣmi ? The sculpture is made of Chunar sandstone but is much weather-stained.

Image 7.—Slab (ht. 2′ 10″; width 1′ 3½″) with a figure of Tārā, seated in an easy attitude (lalitāsana) on a lotus throne with the right foot hanging down and placed on a smaller lotus.

Image 8.—Bust (ht. 1′ 7″; width 1′ 3″) of Tārā in the form of Vajra Tārā, carved in the round with four heads (chaturavaktrā) and eight arms (astabāhu). All the left arms are missing, but portions of those to the right side are extant. The goddess wears an elaborate torque with a large jewel in the middle and a necklace consisting of three strings of beads On the forehead of the front head is a square diamond-shaped mark probably meant for the third eye of the goddess (trinetrā). The hair is arranged in a conical knot visible between the four heads. The head-dresses are profusely adorned with strings of pearls and in the head-dress of the principle head are introduced four miniature figures of Dhyāni Buddhas, namely, two of Aksobhya in the earth-touching attitude, one of Amitābha in meditation and the forth in the attitude of teaching, presumably Vairochana. The head on the back has only one figure of Amoghasiddhi in the attitude of protection (abhayamudrā). There are no Dhyāni-Buddhas on the other two heads. Having large breasts and the elaborate ornaments the image probably belongs to mediaeval period.

Image 9.—Slab (ht. 1′ 1″, width 10″) with a four-armed figure of a goddess seated crossleged on a lotus throne The figure is broken into two across the waist, and a triangular piece is missing at the proper right upper corner. The goddess wears an under-garment and a scarf (uttariya) over her shoulders, the ornaments on her person being a jewelled fillet over her forehead, ear-rings, a torque, a necklace, armlets, bracelets, a girdle and anklets. The lower right hand is in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā) the upper right hand is missing. The lower left hand holds a stalk with two full-blown lotus flowers and the upper left some flaming object. The goddess seems to be Tārā, though none of the Sādhanās mentions the flaming object which the present figure holds in one of the hands. Made of chunar sandstone of pink coulour.

Image 10.—Fragmentary relief (ht. 11"; width 1') with the lower half of the figure of a goddess, presumably Tārā, standing on a lotus. Her right hand was apparently stretched downwards in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā) and the left must have held a blue lotus of which only the stalk remains in part. To her right is a miniature figure seated holding a thunderbolt in front of its breast and a bell under its left armpit. This is evidently Vajra Sattva. To the left of the goddess is a standing figure holding a sword in its right hand Its left hand is missing but the figure was probably Ekajatā. The attendant on the right side of the goddess should have been Mārichi, and the identification of the principal image cannot be considered as certain. Along the proper side of the sculpture is the beginning of the Buddhist creed in Nagari characters of about the 9th century A.D.

Image 11.—Slab (ht. 1' 5½"; width 10½") with pointed top bearing standing figure of goddess, probably Tārā. Her right leg is injured and both forearms missing. Her right hand was apparently held down in gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā); while the left hand holds a blue lotus (utpala) which is intact. The goddess wears a high three-peaked tiara on her head, a garment around her loins and scarf (uttariya) thrown on her arms. The left hip puts out ornaments as usual. The style is of the mediaeval period. Buff-coloured sandstone of Chunar. Discovered in 1904-5 north-west of Jagat Singh Stupa.

Image 12.—Slab (ht. 1' 3"; width 7") with figure of Tārā standing. Feet broken off. Rest in excellent preservation. The hair is fastened in a flat knot on the top of the head. Around the loins is a well-draped garment, but there is no scarf. The image is adorned with a necklace, a garland (hāra), armlets and bracelets. The right hand is in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā) and the left holds the stem of a blue lotus (nilotpala) The head is surrounded by a horse shoe-shaped halo with a lotus pattern roughly carved on it. 8th century characters in नागरी in 9 lines and on the back 5 lines.

Image 14.—Fragmentary slab (ht. 1' 1"; width 11½") with the bust of a four-armed goddess, perhaps Tārā. Her right upper hand, left upper arm and lower forearm broken off. The lower right hand was apparently in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā). There are traces of a scarf (uttariya) on the lower arms and ornaments as usual. Circular halo with a lotus pattern around the head. In the proper right upper corner is a miniature stupa early mediaeval period and of Chunar stone.

Image 15.—Pigure (ht. 1' 1½"; width 8½") of a goddess, presumably Tārā, seated in easy posture (lalitāsana) on an inxerted lotus flower with her right leg placed on the ground. The right arm is broken off with the exception of the hand which is held in front of the knee in the gift-bestowing act (uaradamudrā) on the base four line Inscription of 11th century characters. Broken in three pieces.

Image 16.—Slab (ht. 10½"; width 7") with a figure of the goddess Tārā seated in easy attitude (lalitāsana) on a lotus throne. Her right knee and abdomen are chipped off and the sculpture broken into two above the waist. The image wears a lower garment, a scarf and the usual ornaments. The right hand which is broken off, restes on the knee in the gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā); the left hand holds a blue lotus (nilotpala). In front of the head-dress is the Dhyāni-Bnddha Amitābha in the attitude of meditation (dhyānamudrā). To the upper right of the goddess is carved a miniature stupa in relief and to her proper left, a female figurine kneeling presumably the donor. The style is of the late mediaeval period. Chunar stone of pale buff-colour. Discovered in 1907-8 on the approach to the Main Shrine from east, below the surface.

Image 17.—(ht. 7½"; width 9") Lower half of a figure of a goddess seated in easy attitude (lalitāsana) on a lotus throne. She is adorned with an elaborate girdle (kānchi) and anklets. Unlike other images in this attitude, it is noticed that in the present sculpture it is the left leg which hangs down and not the right. The hands which would supply the means of identification are missing. Beneath the throne in the stalks of a lotus is a goose or duck on a leaf, a device which also occurs among the carvings on the Dhameka Stupa. On the top of the base near the left foot is a figurine of a worshipper with hands joined before the breast.

Image 18.—Fragmentary slab (ht. 11½"; width 9") goddess, in which to judge from the figurine of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha (amitābha-mukutam) carved above her head we must recognize the Red Tārā. The right hand, which is broken off, must have been in attitude of granting security. The flower in the left hand is, in accordance with the cannon, a red lotus (raktotpala) and not a blue lotus (nilotpala). The goddess has an elaborate diadem and ornaments. Near her left hand is a miniature stupa in relief. The style is of the late mediaeval period. Pale buffstone of Chunar. Found in the same locality as No. 17

Image 28.—(ht. 6"; width 10") Base of a sculpture representing the lower part of a goddess possibly Tārā, seated on a lotus in easy attitude (lalitāsana). Her right hand is streched out in front of the knee in the gift bestowing attitude (varadamudrā). Left arm missing, mediaeval style. Chunar sandstone of redish colour discovered in 1906-7 on the approach to the Main Shrine from east 8' below the surface.

Image 30.—(ht. 5½"; width 7") Figure of a goddess presumably Tārā, Body and head are missing. She is ornamented with a girdle and anklets and has part of the stalk of a flower to her proper left. Mediaeval style, same kind of stone as in Image 28, excavated in 1907-8 on the approach to the Main Shrine from east 7' below the surface.

Image 32.—(ht. 6″: width 7″) Figure of Tārā seated in easy attitude (lalitāsana) on a lotus; her bust, head and arms are broken off. Right hand laid against the knee in gift-bestowing attitude (varadamudrā). She is ornamented with the usual ornaments. On the either side of goddess is a stalk of lotus. Mediaeval style. Chunar sandstone of reddish colour. Found in the western precinct of the monastery I, near the surface.

Image 35.—(ht. 9″; width 6 1/2″) Fragment with the bust of a goddess, right arm broken off. Left hand held a blue lotus (nilotpala). We may therefore recognize Tārā. The style belongs to the late mediaeval period; Chunar stone of pale buff colour. Excavated in 1798, among the group of stupas on the north side of Dhamekh Stupa.

Image 36.—(ht. 3 3/4″; width 4 1/2″) Fragment with a bust of Tārā much defaced. Her right hand which is missing was apparently held in the gift-bestowing attitude. Left hand holds a blue lotus (nilotpala). Chunar stone, badly weather-stained. Dates from the mediaeval period.

Image 37.—(ht. 4 1/2″; width 3 1/2″) Fragment representing a blue lotus flower (nilotpala) which may be from the left side of Tārā image. Mediaeval style, grey stone presumably from Chunar unearthed 1904-5, to east of Main Shrine.

Image 38.—(ht. 10 1/2″; width 5 1/2″) Fragment bearing a female figure standing which from its close affinity to the left hand attendant of Tārā in B(F) 2, identify as Ekajatā. This is borne out of the fact that the fragment is evidently broken from the proper left side of a bigger sculpture. The hands are broken. The right hand presumably held a sword (khadga). The feet are missing. To the right of Ekajatā we observe the stalk of a flower which must have been a blue lotus, the well-known emblem of Tārā. The miniature figure squating at the left foot of the goddess must be a worshipper. Mediaeval style, Chunar sandstone of reddish colour. Discovered in 1907-8 in the area to the north of Dhamekh Stupa.

GODDESS TĀRĀ IN ORISSA

A closer and deeper study of the images, make us to believe that the cult of Tārā was in its full swing by the 6th century A.D., both in the Eastern and Western India. All these images are, however, of placid form. It is generally believed that the home of this goddess was eastern India, i.e. Bengal, Assam and Orissa. Now, we discuss the images of Tārā found in Orissa, a very good centre of Buddhism from very earlier period. But Orissa practised, the Hinayana Buddhism and not the Mahāyāna one.

In Orissa, however, there is no evidence of the artistic activities of the Mahāyānists till the end of the Gupta period. In pre-gupta period, Orissa was having the famous centres of Buddhist culture but it was dominated by the Philosophical ideas of great thinkers like

Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Dingnāga, Vasumitra, Dharma Kīrti and others. It may be possibly due to the teachings of these thinkers that we didn't get any artistic material from Orissa before 6th century A. D. It is only the post-gupta period which is important in the history of Buddhism specially Mahāyānic art in Orissa.

There are many famous centres of artistic importance. Following is the list :—1. Sitavinjhi —It is a hilly region in Keonjhar district preserving at natural rock-shelters, one of which is known as Rūvanachhāyā and contains the ancient painting.[1] It is in the ceiling of this rock that the painting is to be noticed 22 feet above the ground. It depicts the royal scene using the five different colours and can be compared with the paintings of the Ajanta and the Bagh caves of 5th century A D.

Side by side of the Śaivite temples in Orissa, the Buddhist temples at Lalitagiri and Udayagiri near Jajapura, were in the making as early as the 7th century A.D. These were plain and simple in design, but having ornamented door—ways and in their large niches were fixed superb images of the Mahāyānic Goddess. In this art the Buddhists excelled undoubtedly.

The remains of some Mahāyānic temples are found at Baneśwara[2] Nasi in Narasinhapur. One can trace there the old plinth of the Padmeśvara temple dedicated to the Padmapāni Avalokiteśvara, whose image is now fonnd close to it along with the image of Tārā, Prajñā-Pāramitā, and other Mahāyānic deities. At Benkada, the capital of the old Kongada Mandala, we have found a ruined temple of Tārā. A portion of its door—way reveals the aristic merits of the temple of the period of 7th century A.D.[3]

The Buddhists, however; paid greater care and attention to the modelling of the images than to the monuments which ensnrined these and hence their sculptural art is of more importance. A large number of Tārā sculptures are found at present in the different centres of Orissa, viz.—Udayagiri, Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, Solompur, Khadipada, Baud and Narasinhapur, and their artistic qualities and iconographic varieties are a subject of absorbing interest.

The evolution of Tantra literature led to the canonisation of the mode of icon-making as a result of which the Buddhist art became mystic but stereotyped and the primary aims of the artists degenerated into serving the purpose of the innumerable devotees rather than that of the art. Nevertheless, Tāntric sculptures could also achive a high order of excellence, as attested by the exquisite images of Chauduār, Ayodhyā, Khiching and some other art centres,

About 12 miles to the south of Virja city, runs the Āsia range of hills, consisting of Udayagiri, Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri and Ālatigiri where Mahāyāna Bundhism was greatly develop-

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1. Sahu, N.K., Buddhism in Orissa, p. 182.
2. Ibid. pp. 186, 187 and Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society 1929, pp. 65-69.
3. Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society. Vol. II, pp. 419-27;
   B. Mishra. Orissa under the Bhauma kings, p. 28.

ed during the Bhaumakara period.[1] These little known hills have preserved magnifieens monuments of Mahāyānic arts, ruins of stūpas and shrines which testify to the vigour and prosperity of Buddhism, in the early mediaeval Orissa. The Colossal statues of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Tārās were executed in graceful style around these hills. (Padma Sambhava and Tārā are invoked in a fairly large Inscription of 25 lines incised on the back of a standing Bodhisattva of Udayagiri near Viraia).

Udayagiri. The Udayagiri forms the easternmost peak of the Asia range, rising one thousand feet from the ground and having only one opening in the east. Within this hill protected semi-circles are found several low mounds consisting of the ruins of Buddhist monuments. The icons found in these mounds are of the Goddesses viz. Bhṛkuti, Gangā, Tārā and Kurukullā. These mostly belong to the 8th and 9th centuries A.D.[2]

1. On the right side of the Four armed Jaṭā-mukuta Avalokiteśvara, there is goddess Tārā[3] and from the inscription we come to know that the image belongs to 9th Century.

2. On the top of the hill covered with shrubs, but ascending a little higher, one comes across a *ledge*, facing the west, by the side of a cave. The ledge is relieved with a series of Buddhist figures and the image of the goddess in this group is identified to be the figure of Kurukullā and her Dhārani is found inscribed just below her seat. She is represented in Lalita-Kalpā pose, holding the red-lotus and the bow in her two left-hands and exhibiting the club and the Varada attitude in her two right hands. She may thus be called a variety of Tārodbhavā Kurukullā, definitely a Tāntric Goddess.[4]

Lalitagiri. Seven miles from Udayagiri, to the south-west, three small hills are named as Lalitagiri or Nalatigiri. On the top of one of these three, there is a Matha having a Colossal image of Buddha and Close to this Math is a carved doorjamb. On the both sides of this door way we have found two beautiful Mahāyānic images, i.e. two armed Padma-Pani on the right, and a four armed Tārā on the left. Carved out in elegant style and pose, the four armed Tārā (5.10′×2′ 3″) holds rosary in the upper right hand, and Vajra in the upper left hand, while her lower left hand carries a Nilotpala and the lower right bestows boon on the worshippers. She appears to be a variety of Chaturbhujā Sita-Tārā[5]. Sthira Chakra Manjusri is accompanied by two female figures- one is prajnā and the other is Tārā, sitting on either side of him in Ardha Paryanka pose.[1]

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[1] R.P. Chanda, Memoires of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 44
Ibid. p. 220 and H.C. Chakladhar, Modern Review, August, 1928, p. 217
Sahu, p. 86
K.R. Subramaniam, Buddhist remains in Andhra desa, pp. 57-59
B.V.K. Rao, Early dynasties of Andhra, p. 82

[2] Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, p. 188.

[3] Sahu. 189 and B. Bhattacharya, Buddhist Iconography, p. 178.

[4] Ibid. p. 191.

[5] Ibid. p. 192.

There is a temple of the Tāntric Goddess, popularly known as Basuki, built probably on the ruins of an older shrine.[2] She may be called one of the forms of Tārā.

Ratnagiri. Ratnagiri is situated towards the north-east of the Lalita-giri, on the rivulet Kelua, a branch of river Virupa. The hill is very important for its rich antiquities and includes in its treaures the beautiful images of Tārā. Tārā images of Ratnagiri are seen in graceful tribhanga pose and the largest one among them (preserved in the Patna Museum) measures 5′5″ × 3′5″. The image represents the two armed Tārā, emanating from the five Dhyani Buddhas. On both the sides of the image are illustrated the eight perils under which the worshipper is to seek the protection of the goddess. She is, therefore, identified as Aṣṭamahābhayā Tārā, and regarded as a variety of Sita Tārā.[3] The eight surrounding deities along with the principal goddess are said to have emanated from the syllables of the Tārā Mantra which is as follows:—'Oṁ tāre tuttāre ture Svāhā'.

Kendrapara. It is a jamindari area in Āsia ranges. There is an image of Tārā, in Indian Museum, Calcutta from Kendrapara. Image is four armed, seated in Lalita-pose on a lotus throne, and is measuring 5′4″×3′. It holds the ankuśa (goad) in the upper right and the Pāśa (noose) in the upper left hands, while the lower right displays the varada pose and the lower left hand holds the long stalk of a nīlotpala flower. On both the side of the aura, there are two Dhyāni Buddhas viz., Amitābh to the left and Akṣobhya to the right, and just below these two are represented two small Tārā figures. The image is identified as that of Durgottāriṇi Tārā, who is a variety of green Tārā.[4] According to Bhaṭtacharya—Durgottāriṇi Tārā has green complexion, lotus as her seat, and garments of white colour. She has four arms carrying in the first pair, the noose and the goad, and showing in the second the lotus and varada Mudrā.[5]

Solampur. To the north west of Jajapura, on the other side of Vaitarani, is situated the old village of Solampur, mentioned in the Neulpur plate of Subhakaıadeva I (790 A.D.). A large number of Mahāyānic and Tāntric deities are found, in and outside the village. The image of the two armed Tārā, standing in Tribhanga pose, which has been attached to the outer wall of the temple, reveals more clearly the artistic iufluence of Ratnagiri, where Tārā images of identical pose and beauty are found in a considerable number.[6] Two small figures of Tārā also

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1. Memoirs of A. survey of India, No. 44 P II fig. 5.
2. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, p. 194.
3. Ibid, p. 195.
4. Journal of Royal Society of Art, Vol. LXXXXII, Aug. 17, 1934, pp. 1017-18.
   and Sahu, p. 198.
   B. Bhattacharya, Buddhist Iconography, p. 137.
5. Ibid.
6. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, p. 200.

found in the outer wall of the temple are of inferior type of art and appear to be a product of a decaying period—possibly 12th century A.D.[1]

Baud. This region was a great centre of Mahāyānic and Tāntric Bundhism in the mediaeval period. Buddhist figures both Mahāyānic and Tāntric, are found in the large number within the compounds of the Rāmeshvara temple. One among them, a seated image of remarkable grace and beauty is now worshipped as Ugra Tārā and is identified by R.D. Benerji with Mahattari Tārā.[2]

Bāṇeśvara-Nāsi : is a hillock island in the bed of the Mahānadī in Narasinhapur. Among Buddhist images of this centre, the most prominant figures are those of Prajnā Pāramitā, Tārā, and Avalokiteśvara, which are carved out with artistic care and iconographic accuracy.[3] The Tārā images of this centre are of great success in sculptural art. Out of the two exquisite figures of Tārā of this site, one has gone to Patna Museum and the 2nd is not traceable. The Patna Museum specimen appeares by its style of treatment not later than the 10th century A.D.[4]

Chauduar. It is about four miles to the north of Cuttack and is situated on the northern bank of Virupā and it had become famous in the 9th century as the capital of Utkal. The antiquities of this place are both, Śaivite and Buddhist, and are dated 9th century A.D. the Images are now missing but their Photo-plates luckily are preserved. Two images of Tārā are below the knees of Prajnā Pāramitā. In a modern temple two images were noticed by R.P. Chanda in 1928[5] and One of them is Khadiravāṇi Tārā. It is a marvellous representation of Goddess, standing in Tribhanga pose, similar to those of Āsia hills, it also holds the long stalk of lotus in the left hand and bestowing boon by the right hand. The image appears like that of celestial virgin, and on its right and left sides are represented respectively the figures of Aśoka-Kāntā, Mārichi and Ekajatā. In the background a torana with trifoil arch is depicted, and heavenly musicians[6] are seen hovering playfully in the sky, the Goddess is identified with Khadiravāṇi Tārā, commonly known as Shyāma Tārā, and who, as emanation of Amoghasiddhi commands great popularity among the Tāntric Buddhists.[7]

Kundeśvara. The village is situated in the Cuttack Distt, and possesses a few Buddhist images The image of the two-armed Tārā seated on the lotus—throne, in Lalita pose exhibits masculine vigour, and but for the prominent busts it might pass for a representation of Padmapāni Avalokiteśvara. But the broken image of Tārā does not lack in

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1. N K. Sahu—Buddhism in Orissa, p. 200.
2. Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1529, p. 69
   Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa, p. 203.
3. Ibid. p. 204.
4. Ibid. p. 205.
5. Ibid. p. 206.
6. Ibid. p. 207.
7. Ibid. p. 208.

the feminine grace and beauty and looks supple and full of life. The lower half is missing, and the remaining portion indicates that it is four-armed and is probably seated figure. Two small Tārā figures standing in Tribhanga pose are seen on both sides of the goddess parallel to her head and the top portion of the slab is occupied by the five Dhyāni Buddhas, Vajra Sattva and the Mānushi Buddha.[1]

Ayodhyā. It is situated in the distt. of Balasore at a distance of six miles from Nilagiri. It was a flourishing centre of Buddhism during the mediaeval period and it is at present one of the richest sites of Buddhist antiquities in Orissa. It was, like, Bhuvaneshvara, once a city of temples and ruins of more than hundred shrines can be counted now. A large number of images are found and the presiding deity of the city was Mārichi, worshipped even now.[2] There appears to be a magnificent temple dedicated to the Goddess Tārā, and the Tārā images of Ayodhyā are the most remarkable in their size, number, variety as well as in artistic beauty and grandeur. Inside the modern temple of Uttareśvara, can be seen a perfactly preserved image of Vajra-Tārā, popularly known as Thākurāṇi of Ayodhyā.[3] The goddess is four-faced, eight armed and is richly ornamented, the faces are graceful and resplendent with blooming youth, and each of the heads has pyramidal crown with an image of the Dhyāni Buddha She sits on the lotus throne in Vajra-Paryanka attitude, and in spite of her deep meditation, appears to be fully conscious of the worshippers before her. She carries in her right hands the Vajra, the noose, the Conch and sharp arrows, and displays in the left the Vajrānkuśa, the nilotpala, the bow and the Tarjanī. She is surrounded by four Tārā figures placed in the four directions, and these may be indentified as Pushpa Tārā, Dhūpa Tārā. Dīpā Tārā and Gandha Tārā, occupying the east, the south, the West and the north directions respectively.[4]

The image of Vajra-Tārā is rarely found, and her representation at Ayodhyā is by far the most perfect specimen in India. A few images of Tārā from this site have found their way to the Orissa Museum at Bhuvaneśvar, but some are under private possession, and one such image amply indicates the artistic excellence attained in this great Buddhist centre.[5] The Goddess is two-armed and gracefully seated on the elevated lotus throne in Lalita pose. The modelling of her limbs, with oval face, round busts, slim waist, and rhythmic hand and feet, reveals artistic sensibility and She wears a complete set of jewellery displaying divine grandeur. The matted locks of hair are carefully arranged and are allowed to fall down on her well-shaped shoulders. The halo behind, is egg-shaped and finely decorates the head, not being itself over-decorated. Two lotus stalks are rising upon her both sides, and she apparently holds the one in her left-hand, while the other one on the right side carries on it a miniature stūpa. But this is all about the decorative elements of the goddess and the artist has conveniently devoted his full attention to the plastic treatment of her body. Her graceful face revealing

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1. N.K. Sahu—Buddhism in Orissa. p. 209.
2. Ibid. p. 210.
3. Ibid. p. 211.
4. Ibid. p. 212.
5. Ibid.

finer expression is indeed, most remarkably treated so as to display not only the beauty of the flesh outside, but also the divine beauty within. The eyes are half shut and directed to the tip of the nose and disclose her concern both in the inner and the outer worlds. The half smile expresses compassion that goes in harmony with the rhythm of her right hand which bestows boon. The upāsikā, probably the donor of the image, kneels down with folded hands underneath the lotus throne and worships with fire pots and meats, while Vidyādharis are seen floating above in the sky with garlands of flowers, meant for the Goddess.[1]

Stray Tārā Figures

1. The image worshipped as Tārini in Banapura, Puri Distt. is undoubtedly that of the goddess Tārā. She is represented as sitting on the lotus throne, holding a lotus-stalk in the left and displaying Varada attitude in the right hand, while the figures of Dhyāni-Buddhas, Ādi Buddha and the mānuṣi Buddha are carved out at the top of the slab.[2]

The Buddhist images are found at several places in the Prachi valley in Puri Distt, which are badly damaged by weather. The small seated image of Tārā found at Jiunti has been completely weather beaten and its artistic value is not known. In the village Mudugala near Jiunti, a four-armed Lokeśvara image is found. The lower two hands of this image rest on the heads of Sudhan Kumāra on the right side and Tārā on the left side respectively[3]. Tārā image with her usual decorative elements, and long lotus stalk in the left appears pleasant and handsom. She is in tribhanga pose and the image does not seem to be very old.

Near about Kāupur village, a beautiful image of Tārā is lying under a tree and although exposed to rain and sun, it is in good condition. The image is two-armed, stands on the lotus—throne, placing its left hand on the head of an attendant female figure, in which hand she also carries a lotus, while it bestows boon with the right hand to a devotee, who is represented below in suppliant attitude. Two fiying Vidyādharas, playing on musical instruments are seen above and the top-most portion of the slab contains the figures of the five Dhyāni Buddhas. She may be dated about 8th-9th century A.D.[4] N.N. Vasu has mentioned the images of Tārā found in Mayurbhanja region in his book the 'Archeological survey of Mayurbhanj'. Figures are known as Ārya Tārā and Janguli Tārā from Hariharpur. Tārā is seated on a lotus. The worship of Marīchi was very much popular in Mayūrbhanja.[5] Mr. Ajit Ghose collected Buddhist sculptures from Orissa and these were in his private possession. These are described by R.D. Banerji in his history of Orissa (Vol. II).

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1. Sahu, Buddhism in Orissa.
2. Ibid. p. 215.
3. Ibid. p. 217.
4. Ibid. p. 221.
5. Ibid. p. 222

A small figure of Tārā stands with folded hands on the right side of Lokeśvara and appears to be plunged in deep meditation like the main image itself. Perhaps, contemporary to this one is the large image of the two-armed Sitā Tārā, (5'10"×2'2") holding the lotus stalk in the left and displaying varada mudrā in the right hand. She is attended by the four armed Bhṛkuti on her left and a kneeling devotee on the right. It belongs probably to the 9th century A.D.[1]

Thus we can say that Orissa has been a very good centre of artistic activities of Buddhism specially of Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna. It was in a flourishing state up to 16th century A.D. It has also been a very good centre of the cult of the Goddess Tārā, as proved by a large number of good and artistic presentations of this goddess, in Orissa.

TĀRĀ IN BENGAL

As Bengal is the homeland of the Sakti cult, it is not surprising that so many female deities associated with Mahāyāna would be discovered here. Figures of different varieties of Tārā, Prajnāpāramitā, Mārichi, Parṇaśavari, Chuṇḍā, Hāriti etc. are well represented in the collections of the different local museums. It is possible here to take note only of a very few of them.

Of the several varieties of Tārā, emanations of different Dhyāni Buddhas, well represented in the local museums, mention may be made of Khadiravāni-Tārā, Vajra-Tārā and Bhṛkuti-Tārā, respective emanations of Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava and Amitābha. Khadiravāṇi, known also as Syāma-Tārā on account of her green colour, is one of the commonest varieties of such images. She may be depicted seated or standing, holding a blue lotus in her hand, and usually accompanied by Aśoka-kāntā (Mārichi) and Ekajtā. An elaborately carved image of this variety of Tārā, datable in the 12th century A.D., and found at Sompara (Dacca) is now in the Dacca Museum. It is in a fairly well-preserved condition and has the additional iconographic interest of having eight miniature figures of Tārā on the prabhāvali (four on each side), and the figure of Vajrasattva on the extreme right corner of the pedestal. A partially preserved metal image of Vajra-Tārā (Tārā of the yellow colour) in the same museum, originally hailing from Majvadi (Faridpur) is of unique importance for, so far as it is preserved, it closely resembles the metal image of the same deity in the shape of an eight-petalled lotus flower, enclosing within its petals the goddess with the figures of the eight attendants carved on the insides of the petals ; originally found at Chandipur (Bhagalpur) and now in the Indian Museum. The image of a three-headed and eight-handed goddess seated in the virāsana pose, with Ganeśa carved on the pedestal and Amitābha in its crown, discovered at Bhavanipur (Dacca) and now in the Dacca Sahitya Parishat is a very interesting

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1. R.D. Benerji—History of Orissa Vol. I & II
Vol. II p. 390, all plates.
Sahu—p. 223.

piece of sculpture both from the artistic and iconographic points of view. Bhattasali thinks that it may represent a hitherto unknown form of Bhrikuti-Tārā, but no sādhanā describing this variety of Tārā fits in with the details of this figure which can be dated in the 10th century A D. There is a great deal of resemblance between this figure and the unique image of a goddess tentatively identified as Mahāpratisarā, a goddess of the Pancharakshā-mandla, in the Dacca Museum. Both these sculptures are beautiful specimens of Pala art in Bengal, and the latter may be approximately dated in the 11th century A.D. The metal image of an eight-handed goddess, described as Sitātapatrā on insufficient data, originally found in Tippera and now in the Dacca Museum, is an extremely rare icon. It is a very beautiful work of art and may be dated in the 9th century A.D. The recent acquisition bo the Rajshahi Museum of an eighteen-armed female deity (Pl. XXVI. 64), representing in all probability the rare Buddhist goddess Chuṇḍā, from Niyamatpur (Rajshahi), and datable in the 9th century A.D., is of great importance to students of Bengal iconography.

IMAGES OF TĀRĀ

Tārā-Sitting in lalita posture on a lotus throne supported by two lions on two sides of a sitting elephant. Left hand missing and the nose broken. Right hand in varada-mudrā, left holds a lotus-stalk. On the right side seated figure of a female holding a vajra and on the left another corpulent female figure. The decorations on the slab are very well preserved. From Nimdighi, Distt. Rajshahi,

2. Tārā-Sitting similar to A (c) I. Left hand and nose broken. The five Dhyani Buddhas surmount the halo. From Nimdighi, P.S. Niamatpur (Manda), Distt. Rajshahi, from the collection of the late Sister Nivedita).

3. Tārā-Sitting crosr-legged. Right hand in varada-mudrā and the left holding the stalk of a lotus. On the right side is a representation of a small stūpa. In perfeet preservation. Excavated from the Padumshahar tank at Deopara, Distt. Rajshahi.

4. Fragment of Tārā sitting cross-legged From Gayashpur, Distt. Dinajpur.

5. Fragment of a standing Tārā with the representation of a stupa on the right side. From Talai, Distt. Rajshahi.

6. A miniature two-handed image of Tārā, in brass, right hand presenting varada-mudrā. From Pandua, Distt. Malda.

7. A miniature two-handed image of Tārā seated, in brass, right hand in varada-mudrā. From Pandua, Distt. Malda.

8. A small image of Tārā similar to A (c) 6. From Pandua, Distt. Malda.

9. A small metal image of two-handed standing Tārā. From Distt. Dinajpur.

10. A miniature image of two-handed Tārā seated in a black slab. From Jogigupha, Distt. Dinajpur.

11. A broken Slab probably of a larger image) containing the image of a Bhrikuti Tārā seated, legs broken. From Chak-Bhavani, Distt. Dinajpur.

12. A miniature image of two-handed Tārā in a black slab, the upper part missing. Face, rigth hand and right leg mutilated Inscribed on the back. From Padumshahar excavation, Deopara, Distt. Rajshahi.

IMAGE OF UGRA-TĀRĀ

This unique image known as the Tārā of Sikarpur is worshipped in the village of Sikarpur in the Bakarganj district, and the place of worship is recognised in some texts as a Pithasthāna or one of the 51 recognised centres of the Sākta form of worship in India.

The details of the worship of Tāra are to be found in the Tārā-tantra published by the Varendra-Research Society of Rajsahi and in the 4th chapter of the Mantramahodadhi-tantra. Tārā-tantra quotes (Pages 11-12, footnote) prose explanation of the image of Tārā from Tārārahasya-vrttika, and Mantramahodadhi has a more concise invocation in verse. It appears from these that Ugra-Tārā should be represented standing on a white lotus rising from the depths of all-prevading waters. She should have the Knife, the Sword, the Blue Lotus and the Skull as attributes iu her four hands. She should have three bloodshot eyes. diverse ornaments as well as snakes decorating her body, the colour of which should be bluish. Her hair should be thrown up in a single braid. Her tongue should protrude out and her teeth should be prominent, giving a terrible appearance to her countenance. Her waist should be covered by the hide of an elephant. She should wear a necklace of skulls. Her brow should be adorned with a flat piece of white bone An image of Śiva (Aksobhya) should be on her head, and she should have firm breasts and a smiling expression. She should tread on a corpse placed between two lotuses.

The Tārā of Sikarpur shows nearly all the above particulars. Five miniatures are depicted above her head. The topmost one is of Śiva. To his right is Brahmā, and to his left are the figures of the Kārtikeya and Ganeśa. The remaining figure is probably of Viṣṇu.

The pedestal depicts six votaries, some male and some female. A maid appears on either side of the goddess.

Ellora—include the Buddhas-Bodhisattvas, like Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Manjusri, Vajrapani and the goddesses like Tārā, Cundā, B hrikuti, Saraswati etc. as well as Gandharvas, Apsaras and Kumars.

At Ellora we have about 25 sculptures of Tārā—sometimes independent and sometimes in the company of another deity.[1]

Tārā, is first mentioned in the Guhyasamāja Tantra. It is, however, in the Mañjusrīmūlakalpa that Tārās like Bhṛkuti, Locanā, Māmakī, Pāndaravāsini etc. are mentioned. They are described as Mahāmudras. Tārā is described as the (विद्याराज्ञी) Vidyārajñi who is full of compassion and given to the alleviation of sufferings of worldly beings[2] the Mahā Pratyangirā Dhāraṇī, for the first time elevates Tārā to the position of the highest deity.[3] This work found in Central Asia, describes her as of 'white colour and noble mein, wearing a garland of' Vajras, holding a Vajra in her hand, and having the figure of Vairochana on her crown.[4] It is from the 7th Century onwards that we find the exuberance of Tārā-stotras, and the goddess Tārā raised to the mothership of all Buddhas and made a companion of Avalokiteśvara, the personification of love (मैत्री) and compassion (करुणा).

Cave No. 2

Immediately on entering the hall, on the left side of the main entrance, is seen an interesting female figure. She is obviously Tārā, judging by the two female attendants on her two sides and the six flying Vidyādharas above, carrying offerings to her. The Tārā is carrying a lotus in her left hand. In her right hand, which is in the Abhaya Mudrā, may be seen the remnants of a rosary. To her left are a number of small panels showing the Buddha seated in a teaching attitude flanked by his usual Bodhisattva attendants.

Cave No. 4—(*7th Century A.D.*) (*two storeys*):

1. The left wall of the shrine shows a female figure holding a lotus and a rosary. She is goddess Tārā.

2. On the left wall of the antechamber of the shrine on the ground floor—is a large figure of Avalokiteśvara seated in the Pralambapāda āsana. On his left is seen a graceful female figure holding lotus flowers in her right hand and an indistinct object in her left. The

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[1] R.S. Gupte—Ellora Iconography. p. 71-72.
[2] The Age of Imperial Kanauj, p, 261.
[3] Ibid. p. 261.
[4] Ibid. p. 262.

lower garment leaves a major part of her left leg uncovered, showing the beauty of her limb. She wears a Mukuta, big earlobes, three necklaces, kamarabandh and bangles. She is Tārā.[1]

To the right of Avalokiteśvara is another charming female figure holding a rosary in her right hand and a Kamandlu in her left. She has four hands.

This panel is Rakta-lokeśvara panel.

3. The right wall shows a female figure. She is seen holding a rosary in her right hand and a lotus in the left. She wears a graceful lower garment and a Jaṭāmukuta. She is Tārā.[2]

Cave No. 5

Main shrine has a Rakta-lokeśvara panel—Avalokiteśvara flanked on two sides by two graceful female figures who are heavily ornamented. She may be Tārā and Bhrkuti.

Cave No. 6—(*7th Century A.D.*)

On the left wall of the antechamber is a standing female figure. Her right hand is broken. In her left she holds the stalk of a lotus. She wears a close-fitting garment which reveals the beauty of her form. On her left shoulder is a deer-skin. In her crown is a Chaitya. She is Tārā. On her left is a male figure holding his right hand above as if in adoration. His left hand is broken. He may be an ascetic, judging from his jatamukuta. The attendant on the left of Tārā is a female attendant holding a chauri in her right hand, the left hand hanging gracefully below. She is richly ornamented.[3]

On the left of the shrine door are two small panels. In the upper panel is carved a Buddha figure seated cross legged in the preaching attitude. In the lower panel Tārā is holding a lotus in her left hand and her right hand in the Varada pose.

Cave No. 8:

On the back wall of the shrine—on the right of the four-handed Padmapani is a figure of Tārā. She is standing on a double-petalled lotus and has a fleeting smile on her face. She holds a lotus bud in her left hand, while her right hand holds the end of her garment. Her lower garment reveals her form. She wears a decorative crown, two diamond necklaces, ear-lobes, plain armlets, bangles and anklets.[1]

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[1] Gupte-Mahajan—Caves p. 159.

[2] Ibid. p. 161.

[3] Ibid. p. 163-64.

Cave No. 9

The Litany of Tārā—Cave No. 9 of Ellora has a litany of Tārā carved on its facade, the panel is in a badly damaged condition. It has six 'dreads' carved, three on each side. In the centre is Tārā. She is shown standing. In her left hand she holds the stalk of a Padma, while the right hand is broken. The stalk of the Padma on which Tārā is standing is held by two Nāgas. To the right side of Tārā are carved scenes depicting the dangers of fire and ship-wreck. On her left side, are represented the dangers from snakes, the enemy and an enraged elephant.[2]

The facode of the cave is very interesting. Here very interesting panel is seen. Tārā is flanked by the six dangers, that of snake, sword and elephant are seen on her left and that of fire and ship-wreck on her right. This sculpture is the only one of its type in western India.

Cave No. 10—*(later half of 7th Century)*

Perpendicular pillars, number of figure sculptures, influence of Tantrism, very beautiful, all this makes the cave very important.

1. At the right end of the Veranda is a small chamber. On the left wall a figure of Avalokiteśvara seated in savya-lalitāsana. A number of figures one above the other are seen. At the top is Tārā in Savya-lalitāsana holding a stalk of lotus in her left hand. Below is a male figure holding a lotus and so on.

2. On the wall of the left side are carved a number of small sculpture. The first panel shows a Tārā seated, her right hand in Varada Mudrā, her left hand probably holding a lotus. She wears a crown, ear-rings, a diamond necklace, a waist-hand, armlets and a stana-hāra (breastlace) which flows down between her breasts. On her right is a devotee shown kneeling.

3. All over the door of the cell are carved small figures of the Buddhas aud Tārās.

4. In the small shrine below is carved the panel of Vajrapāni—having a Vajra in his right hand and lotus in the left. On his both sides are female figures—probably Tārā. They are heavily ornamented and one, on the right, has a beautiful floral Mukuta.[3]

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[1] Gupte-Mahajan, Caves p. 166.

[2] Ibid. p. 166.
See also R.S. Gupta, 1955 (Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum—Bombay).

[3] Ibid. p. 168-70.

5. On the right wall there is another panel of Rakta-lokeśvara. Avalokiteśvara is shown standing, with the lotus stalk in his left hand. On his shoulder is deer-skin in his Jaṭā Mukuta is the Buddha Amitabh.

The female figure on his left side stands holding a lotus in her right hand. Her left hand hangs loose below. She is Tārā. The female figure on his right side is probably Bhṛkuti. Objects in her hands are destroyed.

Cave No. 11—*Chapel-cum-Monastry* (8*th Century.*) *Contemporary of Kailasa temple.* (*Three storeyed.*)

1. On the back wall, on a recessed platform, is Rakta-lokeśvara-seated cross-legged on a lion throne in the Dhyana āsana. In his left hand is a lotus, the right is in Varada Mudrā. On his two sides are female figures.

On the right is Tārā, holding a lotus in her left hand, her right hand being in Varada Mudrā. She wears simple ornaments.

2. Right of the entrance to the shrine, facing the Buddha, is Tārā, holding a stalk of lotus in her left hand.

3. On the left wall are three standing female figures. The first from the left has her right hand in the Abhaya Mudrā and her left in Varada Mudrā. She wears a crown, ear-rings, necklace, armlets, bangles and a plain waist-band. She also wears a Yajnopavita. (Many of the female figures at Ellora wear a यज्ञोपवीत indicating an ancient custom.) Next to her is Tārā. She has her right hand in the Varada Mudrā and the left holds a lotus stalk. She wears a crown, यज्ञोपवीत, and other ornaments.[2]

Cave No. 12—(8*th Century A.D.*)

It is the biggest Buddhist cave at Ellora, spacious courtyard—three storeyed, eight pillars, contemporary to Kailasa temple—Chapel-Monastry (ground floor)[3].

1. On the pilaster of the third corridor are a number of small panels. One shows a seated Vajrasattva flanked by Bodhisattva attendants, Padmapāni and Vajrapāni.

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1. Gupte—Mahajan—Caves, p. 170,
2. Ibid. p. 171-73.
3. Ibid. p. 175-76.

Below this, is a figure of Tārā seated in savya-lalitāsana and holding a stalk of lotus in her left hand, with her right hand in the Bhumi-sparsa mudrā.

2. On the right of the pilaster are more carvings. A figure of Tārā is seen holding a stalk of lotus in her hand. She wears ear-rings, necklace, a decorative stana-hāra and waist-band. On the left of the entrance to the shrine, inside, is Tārā. Her right hand is in Varada mudrā. In the left she holds the stalk of a lotus. She wears a crown, ear-rings, a rich necklace, armlets, bangles and a breast band across her big and round breasts.

3. On the right wall is an interesting panel, which is fairly large in size. In the centre is Padmapāni Avalokiteśvara—with Tārā on the left and Jambhala on the right.

4. Tārā is seated on a lotus in savya-lalitāsana with her right hand in the Varada pose, the left hand holding the stalk of a lotus. In her decorative crown is a small Chaitya. She wears a precious necklace and other ornaments. [In early medieval times Tārā was considered a goddess of navigation. Since early times traders patronised Buddhism.

5. *First Floor (Veranda)*

Avalokiteśvara is flanked by Tārā and Bhṛkuti. He is Rakta lokeśvara. On his right is Tārā. She is seated in Vāma lalitāsana on a lotus. Her right hand is in Varada pose while the left holds a lotus. She wears a crown and the usual ornaments.

6. On the left of the shrine door, inside, is Tārā seated in Padmāsana on a lotus. Right hand in वरमुद्रा, left hand holding lotus-stalk. She wears a decorative crown, rich earrings, necklace, stana-hāra and other ornaments.

7-8. In front of the stair case are 2 panels. One shows the Buddha with a stupa on his right and Manjusri and Tārā seated on his left. The other shows Padmapāni accompanied by Tārā.

Second Floor

On the side and back walls of the antechamber to the shrine are 12 goddesses. On the left and right walls these are six, three on each side, and on the two back walls there are six more, three on each wall. All the goddesses are seated on lotuses in the savya-lalitāsana.

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1. Gupte—Mahajan, Caves. 177-78.

1st on left wall—Vajradhātviśvari.

2nd on left wall—right hand in वरमुद्रा ornamented. naga holds the lotus—she is sitting.

3rd on left wall—four-handed, rosary, वरमुद्रा, bowl & a book, she Is Cundā.

Left side back wall. (from left to right.)

9. Four is seated on a double petalled lotus, the stalk of which is held by two Naga figures, with birds close by. Her right foot which hangs below rests on a lotus. Her right hand is on her right Cap in the Varada pose. The left hand, which rests on the left Cap, holds a stalk of lotus. Her saree is held by a waist-band. She wears a decorative crown. The Buddha in the crown and the lotus in her left hand indicate her as Khadiravāni Tārā. She wears ear-rings a necklace of rubies and other precious stones, a kamarabandh, armlets, bangles and anklets.

The figure next to her is seated on a lotus the stalk of which held by Nagas, its side a swan. The right hand is in the वरद pose. The left holds a stalk of the lotus ovee which is a double Vajra. She is Tārā, the Śakti of Amoghsiddhi. She wears a decorative crown a necklace, stanahāra and other ornaments.[2]

Right wall of antichamber. Left to right.

10. Four-handed—Bhṛkuṭi.

11. Paṇḍarā—Sakti of Amitābh. lotus stalk in left hand.

12. The last female figure holds the stalk of a lotus in her left hand—right hand broken. In her crown a small Stūpa. She is Tārā.

On the left side of the entrance, facing the Buddha figure is Tārā, seated in Padmāsana on a lotus. She has a lotus in her left hand.

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1. R.S. Gupte—B.D. Mahajan, 178-79.
2. Ibid. p. 180.
   Ajanta, Ellora & Aurangabad Caves, Bombay 1962.

AURANGABAD CAVES

Cave No. 7—The Main Hall. (Pl. CXLVII)

On the left of the shrine-door is a very graceful standing female figure. Her figure shows great beauty of form. It is clear that the artist has drawn all the curves of her body with great vigour. She is holding a lotus in her left hand. Her right hand is broken. The figure is about 5' 4" in height. She is wearing earrings, beautiful necklaces, armlets, an extremely beautiful girdle and a transparent costume. She is Tārā, Two more female figures can be seen on either side of her.

On the right of the shrine door is another figure of Tārā, of life-size dimensions, gracefully standing on a lotus and resting herself on her right foot. She is wearing a decorative head-dress. Her transparent dress is shown flowing in between her legs. On her right is an extremely beautiful female figure of an attendant resting on a dwarf.

Cave No. 8 *and* 9*—One only*

In the outside Veranda, on two side walls, are six female figures in groups of three. The female figure standing in the middle on the right side holds a lotus in her right hand. She has a very decorative head-dress and wears armlets, necklaces and earrings. She is probably Tārā. On either side of her are female attendants.

On the left side is a standing female figure, probably of Tārā, holding a lotus in hei left hand. Her head is broken, but necklaces, armlets and chains are seen on her person. To her left is an interesting female figure with a beautiful head-dress, wearing necklaces, ear-rings, armlets and girdle.

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1. R.S. Gupte—Caves. p. 234.
2. Ibid. p. 235.

TĀRĀ OUTSIDE INDIA

The Mahāyāna school had also its period of the exclusive adoration of the male principle, from the first to the middle of the fourth century A.D. At this epoch the Yoga system was grafted on to the Northern Buddhist school by Āsanga, and the adoration of the feminine principle was introduced in the form of the goddess Tārā. In the seventh century she took on two distinct forms, and in the succeeding centuries her forms multiplied, forming a group of twenty-one Tārās. Other goddesses, also having the rank of Bodhisattva, made their appearance, but none of them gained the popularity of Tārā.

By the seventh century the influence of the Tantra system had begun to weaken the austerity of the Northern Buddhist school and not only did Tantra, or ferocious forms of the goddesses, appear, but the adoration of the śakti, or female energy of a god, was introduced, and the 'green' Tārā was declared the śakti of Avalokiteśvara.

Gradually the popular belief throughout Tibet and Mongolia developed in favour of the view that a god was more disposed to listen and grant their requests when worshipped in company with his śakti. As a result, nearly every god was given a female energy, who was represented with him in the yab-yum attitude, which is considered the sign of degradation of the Mahāyāna school.

The worship of the śakti was never adopted in China or Japan. The only representations of a god in yab-yum attitude are found in a few Lama temples still existing in China.

In China the only feminine divinity whose popularity equalled the masculine deities was the goddess Kuan-yin. She was, however, not worshipped as the consort of Avalokīteśvara, but as a feminine manifestation of the god himself, for a specific purpose—as was also the goddess Kwan-non in Japan.

In Japan several goddesses of the Mahāyāna pantheon are worshipped. In both China and Japan, the male principle alone is considered of primary importance, since no woman, without gaining masculinity through re-incarnation, can enter Sukhāvati, the paradise of Amida.

There are three forms of feminine divinities: viz., goddesses with rank of Bodhisattva, śakti, and dākini. The goddesses are generally classified into two classes: the pacific and the angry forms.

The pacific goddesses are generally represented, seated, and wear the Bodhisattva ornaments, including the five-leaved crown. They are of smiling expression, and usually have the urna on the forehead. The hair is long and wavy.

The angry goddesses, with dishevelled hair, the third eye, and Tantric ornaments and attributes, resemble the Dharmapāla form of the gods.

The śakti are rarely represented alone, but in the embrace of the gods, and are of pacific or angry form, according to the god with whom they are represented. They are generally covered at the hips by a tiger skin or lion skin, and have either Bodhisattva or Tantra ornaments and attributes.

The goddess Tārā was enrolled among the Northern Buddhist gods in the fourth century; and by the seventh, according to Hiuan Tsang there were many of her statues in Northern India. Between the eighth and twelfth centuries her popularity equalled that of any god in the Mahāyāna pantheon. Many temples and colleges were dedicated to her, and there was hardly a household altar without a statue of Tārā. Her worship extended upto Java, where a temple was dedicated to her about 779 A D. Neither Tārā nor any other goddess was worshipped in Ceylon or Burma. The Southern Buddhist school never adopted the feminine divinities.

'Tārā', is the Sanskrit name of the goddess, and is derived from the root 'tar' (to cross). In other words, Tārā helps to cross the Ocean of Existence. The Tibetan translation of 'Tārā' is sgrol-ma (pro. dol-ma), which means 'saviouress'. Her Mongolian name 'Dara eke' means 'Tārā mother', and she is called the 'mother of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas'. The faithful may appeal to her directly without the intermediary of a lama, which is not the case with the other deities of first rank, and possibly accounts for her great popularity.

Her titles are to the mystic number of 108, and the manual of worship of Tārā is commonly found throughout Tibet. It is called the 'Praises and Spells (dhārani) of the pure, original Tārā', and is believed to have been written by the Dhyāni-Buddha Vairocana. The author was more probably the monk Vairocana, who lived in the eighth century.

There are many legends in regard to the origin of Tārā, one of them being that she was born from a blue ray that shone from the eye of Amitābha. The generally accepted legend, however, is that a tear fell from the eye of the god of mercy viz. Avalokiteśvara, and falling in the valley beneath, formed a lake. From the waters of the lake arose a lotus-flower, which, opening its petals, disclosed the pure goddess Tārā.

The lamas believed that Tārā was incarnate in all good women, and in the seventh century they declared the two pious wives of the Tibetan Buddhist king, SRong-tsansgam-po, as incarnations of Tārā. She was then given two distinct forms: the 'white', believed to be incarnate in the Chinese princess Wen-cheng, daughter of a Chinese King belonging to the Imperial family and the 'green', incarnate in the Nepalese princess Bribsum, daughter of the Newar king AmśuVarman. The white and green Tārās thus became distinct deities, The former was given as symbol the full-blown white lotus, while the latter carried an utpala, i.e. blue lotus with the petals closed.

As the lotus opens by day and closes by night, the white Tārā with the full-blown lotus, and the dark Tārā with the utpala having its petals closed, may symbolize 'day' and 'night'. Or in other words, since they were born from the tears shed by Avalokiteśvara, they may represent his never-ceasing grief at the miseries of mankind. Or they might also symbolize the willingness of Tārā to soothe human suffering by day as well as by night, for it is believed that Avalokiteśvara imposed her that duty.

In support of the above hypothesis, Blonay mentions a representation of Tārā found in a Jain temple in the fort of Dambal. She is seated, holding a full-blown lotus in her hand. To the right is a sun, to the left a moon, under which is a standing figure holding a lotus with its hand in namaskāra (prayer) mudrā. In the library of the Institute de France there is a temple-painting of Padmapāni, with the sun emanating from the right eye and the moon from the left. The white Tārā was born from a tear which fell from the right eye, and the green Tārā from a tear from the left eye of Avalokiteśvara. It is also interesting to note that the second Tārā in the group of twenty-one Tārās is called 'of white moon brightness', and that the seventeenth Tārā carries a sun and a moon.

The Tantric forms of Tārā made their appearance when the Northern Buddhist school became weakened by the pernicious influence of the Tantra system. The ferocious forms of the goddess were represented in the three colours: red, yellow, and blue, which, with the white and green pacific forms, completed the five colours of the five Dhyāni-Buddhas, of whom they were believed to be the śaktis.

In the collection of Tibetan temple pictures belonging to M. Bacot, there is a painting of Tārā with 'one thousand heads and arms'. The heads are arranged in two rows on either side of the central row, superposed one above the other ad infinitum, and the five rows are painted green, red, white, yellow, and blue. She is represented standing, which is very unusual in Tibetan representations of the goddess.

The Tārās are almost seated, but if they accompany Avalokiteśvara, or any other important god, they are usually standing. Tārā may be surrounded by her own manifestations as well as by other gods.

The non-Tantra forms of Tārā wear all the Bodhisattva ornaments, and are smiling and graceful. Their hair is abundant and wavy. The Tantra forms have the ornaments and symbols of the Dharmapāla, with the hair mishevelled and having the third eye.

In Japan Tārā is found more often in temple banners than in statues. The

Japanese believe that Tārā made two vows: to conquer evil (as green Tārā) and to save human beings (as white Tārā). There is, however, in Japan, but one form of the goddess. She holds the lotus, and may be making 'charity' and 'argument' mudrā, or have the hands folded. Her colour is a whitish green, and she never has eyes on the palms of her hands or the soles of her feet like the Tibetan white Tārā. She holds the blue lotus or the kichi-jo-kwa (pomegranate), which is believed, as in India, to be the symbol of fecundity.

In China her worship is practically unknown, although Hsuan Tsang mentions a statue of the goddess Tārā, 'of great height and endowed with divine penetration'.

THE GODDESS TĀRĀ IN CEYLON

Ceylon is considered the home of Theravāda Buddhism, the orthodox teachings of Buddha. It was introduced in the 3rd century B.C. in Ceylon by Mahinda-thera, son of Emperor Aśoka. In the neighbouring country India, Buddhism underwent many changes in the course of time. Mahāyāna is the name given to the changed or developed doctrines of Buddhism. Though introduced in earlier centuries of Christian era, it is only about the 6th centuries onwards that Mahāyāna appears to have gained a strong foothold in Ceylon. In this period Statues of Avalokiteśvara and Manjushri were made. These Bodhisattvas were also eulògised in an Inscription, e.g. at Tiriyay.

From the time of Sena II (866-901) upto the Chola conquest of Ceylon in 1017, is the important period for our studies. A study of the monuments of this period and literary, sculptural, and epigraphical evidence point to a vigorous activity among the Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism which as flourishing side by side with those of the Theravada school. Tantric gobdess Tārā was known and images were made for her worship. Mahāyāna scriptures were also known and worshipped and extracts from such texts were engraved on copper tablets and enshrined in the Stupas of a distinctly Mahāyānist character.

The literary works of 14th & 15th centuries, have a mention of so many Bodhisattvas of Mahāyānists. Natha (Avalokiteśvara) and his spouse Tārā are mentioned in the Sandesa poems. The Tisara Sandesa (14th century) refers to the shrine of Natha at Dorawaka in the Kegalla district. (T.S.v. 126-7) Tārā the consort of this Bodhisattva, has been mentioned and eulogised immediately after the description of Natha. She is referred to as queen (biso), the title of the wives of the gods ocurring in the Sinhalese literature. The consort of Lokeśvara-Natha at Wegiri-deval is also commonly called Biso-Baṇḍāra.

Mahāyānist sculptures discovered in Ceylon are very interesting due to their complex and varied nature. Of these some are in British Museum-London, Boston Museum U.S.A. and the national museum of Ceylon. Images of Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāni, Manjushri, Jambhala, Tārā and Cuṇḍā were created by the Mahāyānists in Ceylon. Many of these deities were worshipped and cults associated with them were in vogue about the close of the Anuradhpur period. Their creations, beginning from the 7th century, lasted upto the 12th century and survived in the form of local cults till about the 15th century.

TĀRĀ IMAGES FROM BIHAR

Bihar has been the centre of Buddhism and artistic activities. From very early period we find specimens of buddhist art througout Bihar. Later on when Tantrism became predominant in Buddhism—Bihar again became the centre of art schools. Nalāndā and Vikram Sila remained as the main Centres of Higher education for centuries together. We come across the finest specimens of Buddhist sculptures. With the advent of Mahāyanā as well as Vajrayāna schools of Buddhsim—Tārā became the most important Female deity of Buddhism. From Gupta period to Pāla—Sena period, the goddess Tārā enjoyed the Supremacy as the Goddess saviouress. We find a large number of bronzes, miniature images and stone images of female deities especially of Tārā. All the forms of Tārā are represented in art. We have images—placed in different musems—found from Nālandā, Bhagalpur, Gayā, Kurkihar etc. as well as from Patna and Hazaribagh. These images generally are in accordance to the Sādhanas.

1. Telhana (Patna)—Buddhist ruiens are identified with tilas-okiya, described by Hieun Tsang. He mentions in the middle of vihara, these is a standing statue of Tārā Bodhisattva, and to the right one of Avalokiteswara. Its history goes back to 7th Cent. A.D.[1]

2. Tārā Chandi rock Inscriptions of Sasaram of V. S. 1225—mentions Tārā Chandi goddess.[2] The Tārā Chandi hill (Sasaram—Bihar) is named after an image of the goddess Tārā-Chandi. It is carved on a ledge of its rock which is still worshipped there.

3. The Syāma Tārā, sitting in Lalitāsana on a large and double lotus is one of the finest examples of the middle of the 9th Cent. A.D. The image is from Kurkihar (Patna).[3] One stone figure of Tārā, with heavy head and large eyes—is much similar to Gurjara—Pratihār sculpture from M.P.[4]

Hilsa (Patna) Hindu and Buddhist temples. In 1924 Shri H. N. Shastri and Ray noticed imges of Buddha, Tārā etc. at a modern Śaiva temple at the place. The image of Tārā has three Inscriptions and is now in Patna Museum.[5]

Three Inscription on the images of Tārā are:

(a) Containing invocation to the Goddess Tārā.

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[1] D.R. Patil. The Antiquarian remains in Bihar, p. 562.
[2] Epigraphia Indica, Vol. IV, p. 311.
[3] K.P. Jayaswal—Metal Images of Kurkihara Monestry, p. 70.
[4] Banerji—Eastern Indian Medieval Sculpture, p. 22.
[5] Antiquarian Remains in Bihar, p. 168.

(b) Containing the usual Buddhist creed formulae.

(c) Recording the installation of the image by one Gangādhara in the 35th regnal year of King Devapāla deva of the Pāla dynasty.

The Inscriptions thus belong to the 9th Cent. A.D. and also refer to the learned monk Śri Manju Śrideva of Nālandā Mahāvihāra, and calls Gangādhara as the Paramopāsaka of the vihara.[1]

Itkhori (Hazaribagh) Ancient site. In 1920 or so a stone image of the Buddhist deity Tārā was discovered from here, containing an inscription of the time of King Mahendra Pāladeva. The Inscription is only noticed in Annual report of the Central Archaeology Deptt, (1920-21. P. 35)[2]. The place has not been fully explored till now.

An image of Tārā was found from Aphsad (Gaya)[3]. There is a temple of Tārā Devi, but male deity was worshipped as female deity. It[4] was situated in Bodhagaya. Here inside a modern temple a large standing image of the Buddhist Goddess Tārā is worshipped. The image belongs to the Pala period.[5]

Foucher refers to two Palm—leaf manuscripts containing inscribed miniature paintings 'तीरभुक्ती वैशाली तारा' i.e. the Tārā of vaishali in Tirhut. The Buddhist images of the Pala period with Inscriptions are found from locality and the fort of Basarah Mujaffrpur. Bihar.[6] These belong to 12th Cent. A.D.

From Kurkihar, Tārā image has been found. She is attended by two females, one chauri bearer and another one holding a chatra. The front of the pedestal has an Inscription. Two Tantric images of Tārā, on a lion throne. The back is supported by Shardulas. It is inscribed. Another figure of Tārā is five feet high.[7]

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1. (J. Bihar & O.R. Society X—31-36.
2. Antiquerian remains in Bihar, pp. 176-77.
3. Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, XXII, p. 302.
4. Antiquerian remains from Bihar, p. 68.
5. Ibid. p. 144.
6. Archeological Survey Report 1903, p. 82-86.
7. K.P. Jayaswal—from Kurkihar, pp. 75, 78.

TĀRĀ—IMAGES FROM NĀLANDĀ

A large haul of Bronzes has been made during the excavations of Nālandā. The best pieces belong to the time of Pāla Kings—Dharmapāla and Devapāla. The period was extended over more than a century from about A.D. 780 to 892 and was marked by great intellectual and artistic activity. Two artists of that age, namely Dhiman and Utpala acquired the highest form for their skill as painters and sculptors and bronze—founders. One of the Inscriptions of the time of Dharmapāla mentions that sculpture having been made by the Shilpis of Nālandā. 'अत्रत्यै शिल्पिभिः' and mentiones their names as well. This shows that Nālandā must have had its own workshops in those times.

Nālandā has yielded a large number of sculptures in clay, stone and metal. These are mostly Buddhist, though there are Jain and Brahmanical sculptures also. These Buddhist images belong to Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna school. We find many images of Tārā goddess.

There is one image of Amitābh. He is flanked by his Śakti Tārā drawn in diminitive form to show his superiority.

The Vajra Tārā image, through fragmentary is noteworthy for the skilful way, it has been chiselled. Her florid head—dress and austere face are well executed. There is an image of 18 armed Tārā—on the head of Avalokiteswara. There are many miniature images of the goddess Tārā, ranging from 7th Cent. A.D. to 1200 A.D.

The eastern row of Monastries facing west, On the entrance, on two sides of the porch there were large niches containing stucco figures of Buddhist deities—looking fresh. One of the figures was that of the Buddhist female deity called Tārā. It is to the noted that Hiuen Tsang describes such an image at the entrance of Nalanda Monastry.

Monastic Seals—numerous ones—showing wheel of law (धर्मचक्र), name of संघ, महाविहार नालन्दा Inscribed on them. They are of various shapes having various designs and symbols. Some contain the representations of the Buddha, Bodhisattva अवलोकितेश्वर, or Padmapani, Maitreya or Tārā, the goddess. Some have Stupas also.

One bronze image of Tāra (Pl. LXVII fig. 2) depicts the goddess as wearing a sari which ends a little above the ankles. One part of it failing from the waist covers the lower part of the body, the other part going from the right of the waist crosses the chest diagonally and then its long end falls over the left leg.

A seated Tārā[1] (Pl. LXIX fig. 4) in वरदमुद्रा wears a sari reaching to the ankles. It is

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1. H.N. Shastri—Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India, 1919-20, p. 170.

similar to Tārā of (Pl. LXVII fig. 2). A bronze image of Tārā (Pl. LXX fig. 1) shows her in sari in vikacchā fashion, held in place by decorated girdle-belt.[1] An 18 armed goddess (Pl. LHXIV fig. 1) (Tārā) is depicted in one sculpture as wearing a sari which reaches the ankles.[2]

Most of the female figures from Nalanda wear crowns. Tārā (Pl. LXVII fig 2) (Pl. LXIX fig. 3/4), wears decorated crowns—Tārā (Pl. LXX fig. 1) wears a fillet of two rows of beads or pearls on the forehead. She also seems to wear another fillet of heads on the top knot of her har.[3]

Standing Tārā (Pl. LXVII fig. 2) has her hair arranged in a top knot, allowing curly locks to fall on the shoulders. The top knot is partially covered by Mukuta a The hair is parted in the middle and a few small curls are allowed to fall on the forehead.[4]

Another standing Tārā (Pl. LXX fig. 1) has arranged her hair in double top knots. the upper knot being of the shape of fan. The hair is parted in the middle and two bands of heads are worn on the forehead. Another string is perhaps worn on the top of the first knot.[5] Tārā from Nalanda (LXXVI fig. 6) wears मकरकुण्डल.[6] (Pl. LXIX fig. 4) Tārā wears another type of necklace.

Thus Nalanda is very rich in the findings of beautiful images of the gooddes Tārā.

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1. H.N. Shastri—Annual Report of Archaeological Survey India, 1919-20, p. 171.
2. Ibid. p. 186.
3. Ibid. p. 190.
4. Ibid. p. 191.
5. Ibid. p. 196.
6. Ibid. p. 200.

TĀRĀ ICONS. FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Tārā holds the same position in Buddhism which Durgā occupies in Brahmanism. Tārā is the counterpart of Avalokiteśvara like Pārvati with Śiva. The earliest representations of Tārā may be those in the cave temples at Ajanta, Ellora, and Kanheri. The ascribable date of these may be circa A.D. 6th century.[1]

Two sculptures of Tārā have been preserved in Archaeological Museum, Sanchi.[2] Out of these Tārā sculptures, one is shown seated in lalitāsana. Its head and right four arms damaged She is well ornamented and holds a full-blown lotus. On either side of the deity are two female attendants standing, one above the other devotee is shown in Anjalihasta-mudrā. Artistically the sculpture may be assigned to 10th century. A defaced sculpture of Tārā exhibited on a lotus-pitha deserves mention here. She has raised her left hand and holds a lotus-stalk. Another lotus is shown rising from a pot and it reaches upto the knee. The third sculpture of the same deity was noticed in Mahatma Gandhi Museum at Raipur.

Sirpur (or ancient Śripura) in Madhya Pradesh assimilated characteristics of both the eastern and the western schools of art—as is evidenced by the beautiful bronze Tārā (6a) now in the collection of Mani Jina vijay. This image, assignable to A.D. 900 is a master—piece of the Post-Gupta period in North India. Though it shows predominantly Pāla characteristics rather than western inflence.[3] Sirpur also yielded a small group of Buddhist bronzes of which the beautiful Tārā has been mentioned.

2. (ht. 7"; width 4") Fragment from the proper right side of a bigger sculpture bearing a figure of a goddess, presumably Tārā, standing and inclined to the right. Her feet are missing. Her right hand is disposed in front of her breast (vikāsayanti), while the left holds a flower. High head-dress and ornaments. To her proper left is the stalk of a flower which must have been held in the right hand of the main figure. Mediaeval style and Chunar sand stone. Excavated in 1904-5 north west of Jagat Singh Stupa.

3. (ht, 8³/₄"; width 6½"). Fragment with a bust of similar goddess. But the flower seems to be a blue lotus (nilotpala) in which case we might recognize, in the figure, the goddess Tārā. The third eye is indicated between her brows. Lavishly adorned with ornaments. Chunar stone of redish colour. Mediaeval style. Unearthed in 1904-5 east of the chapel on the south-west of the Main Shrine.

4. (ht. 3½"; width 5½") Fragment showing the bust of a goddess with a figurine of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha in her head-dress and therefore some form of Tārā. Both arms are broken. The flower in her left hand seems to be a red lotus instead of a blue lotus. Made of blue stone of Gaya, in mediaeval style. Discovered in 1907-8 on the approach of the Main Shrine.

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1. Goddesses in Madhya Pradesh p. 55.
2. Ibid. 56.
3. Journal of Indian Museums VIII (1952/p. xi) p. 23.

5. (ht. 11"; width 9") Lower part of a sculpture with legs of a goddess presumably Tārā, standing to her right we notice Mārichi holding an aśoka flower in her left hand and what must have been a thunder-bolt (vajra) in the other. To her left is represented a male figure with a moustache and a nimbate head. His breast is encircled by a snake. This figure is presumably Hayagriva.

6. (ht. 1' 5"; width 11") Votive stupa with the pinnacle broken off. The basement is square and has recessed corners. It is carved on each face with a niche with a trefoil arch. Of the figures in these niches two represent Tārā in easy attitude. The third is a Bodhisattva supporting his head on his right hand. The fourth figure is of a female seated cross-legged with a bowl in the lap.

7. Tārā (ht. 2' width 11½") Votive stupa carved round the drum with figures of Buddha seated in the attitudes of enlightenment and teaching, then a figure holding a bowl on the lap and another in the attitude of teaching. The second figure in the attitude of expounding the law presumably represents the great miracle enacted by the Buddha at Srāvasti. The niches in which these figures are seated are analogous to those in D (b) 11. On the four sides of the basement, we have (a) Kubera, the god of wealth, seated in easy attiiude with vijapuraka (bijaura) in his right hand and the pearl-vomiting mongoose (nakula) in the left, (b) Hāriti or Vasundharā, her right hand in the gift-bestowing attitude, and the left holding a flower and her right foot resting on a vase lying upside down, (c) Tārā in easy attitude, her right hand on the knee in the same attitude as Vasundharā, the left holding a blue lotus (nilotpala), (d) Avalokiteśvara seated in the usual style of Bodhisattvas in the gift-bestowing attitude while his left hand grasps the stalk of a red lotus (padma).

8. Hāriti—Mediaeval sandstone (1' 7½" × 1' 9"). The goddess is headless with headless child lying on lap supported by her hands. Hāriti is draped and has numerous ornaments on the neck, and breasts, also armlets. and wristlets. She sits in lalitāsana, her right leg resting on pedestal, left drawn along the full blown lotus seat. A devotee shown on the right side and the left end covered by part of an animal's legs.

9. Tārā Prajnāpāramitā (2¼' × 1' 1°). Two-armed, one faced, on a seat of full-blown double lotus. The goddess sits in lalitāsana with her right foot resting on a lotus below and the left leg drawn along the lotus seat. She holds her right hand in the varada mudrā against the right knee. Her left arm is lost. The rest of the ground on the slab is covered with lotuses and the conical top bears the figures of the five Dhyāni Buddhas. The workmanship is conventional but the figure of the goddess is calm and pretty. The sculpture is finished in black stone.

10. Nila Tārā from Mahoba. Double armed. Left hand bears full blown lotus with stalk, right touching the earth. The goddess sits in padmāsana with soles of feet turned upwards. Seat of lotus supported by two tiny human figures. On either side small female figure. Figures of five Dhyāni Buddhas imprinted on the conical top of the slab. Earrings, short and long necklaces, broad armband and bangles. Usual drapery. Third finger of right hand supporting stupa in open palm; well preserved. Late Mediaeval period.

TĀRĀ IMAGES FROM PAHARPUR

Two Plaques from Pāhārpur depict the Buddhist goddess Tārā as wearing a sāri. Tārā seated on a lotus (Pl. XII fig. 1) wears a sari, reaching the calves. Going over from the right side of the waist one part of the sari crosses the chest digonally and seems to dangle on the back, serving as an additional covering like the present day Sari. The standing Tārā (Pl. XIV. fig. 2) also wears a sari in Vikācchā fashions, one part of which falling in folds from the waist covers the lower part of the body and the other part is worn in the manner described above. In both the cases the sari is worn a little below the navel and is held in position by a girdle—belt with around clasp and the sari is worn in such a manner that it is spread over the bosom leaves the right breast partially uncovered. A seated woman (Tārā) seems to wear horizontally gathered close fitting trousers (Pl. XV fig. l) fastened to the waist by a girdle-belt with clasp.

(Pl. XXXVII) It represents Tarā as wearing a very close fitting lower garment which seems to be either a broad sāri worn in Kācchā fashions or trousers fastened by flat belt. Big round कुण्डल worn as the lobe of the ear are seen most frequently in the Pāhārpur Plaques and sculptures. This type of कुण्डल are worn by Tārā (Pl. XV fig. 1). Tārā wears as necklace, string of globular heads (Pl. XIV fig. 1 & 2).

Tārā (Pl. XV fig. 1) wears lozenze—shaped armlets with an eye-shaped ornament in the middle. Pahārpur—Rajshahi Distt (Bengla Desa), Sonapura Vihars of Pālas. A temple of Tārā was discovered. It was laid bare.

The Nālandā Inscription of Vipula ŚriMitra of 12th Cent. A.D.—records a donation by विपुल श्रीमित्र, a monk hailing from Sonapur to the Nalandā monastry, and mentions the renovation of the building of a temple of Tārā.[3]

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1. Memoires of A.S. India No. 55. P. 6. dates each 5th Cent. A.D. lasts 13th Cent. A.D.
2. Details Arch. Survey Reports 1930 34 PP. 122.
3. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol. X, pp. 31-36.

TĀRĀ IMAGES OF THE PĀLA PERIOD

The rise of the Pāla Empire in Bengal and Bihar gave a great impetus to art in these provinces, which caused great improvements in the plastic art of this country and finally led to the formation of a new school of sculpture. The rise of this school must have taken place soon after the formation of the empire of the Pālas, viz in the 9th Cent. A.D. and this goes upto the 12th Cent. A.D. (800-1200).[1]

Fortunately the majority of images and architectural specimens also, discovered till now, can be dated with much certainty as these are generally inscribed. Some of the images are more important for dating as these consist entirely of votive inscriptions, mentioning the name of the King, the year and the name of donor.

Some of the Tārā images are:—

1. A stone image of Tārā dedicated at Nālandā in the 35th year of the reign of Devapāla, discovered at Hilsa in the Patna District.[2]

2. An image of a female deity, discoverd at Itkhauri, in the Hazaribagh distt of Bihar. It is dedicated in the 8th year of Pāla Emperor Mahendra Pāla.

3. Image of Tārā discovered at tetrawan in the Patna Distt and dedicated in the 2nd year of Rāmpāla.[3]

Some of the images beer the date and name of the donor but omit the name of the ruler.

An image of Tārā seated on a lotus throne, with a votive Inscription on its pedestal. The goddess has two hands of which the left is in the posture of blessing while the right holds an indistinct object. She is attended by two other female figures, both seated.[4]

The finest specimen in this group is, however, an image of Mahattari Tārā, seated on a lotus throne, with the left foot placed on a lotus below the throne, She holds a lotus with stalks in her right hand, while the left hand is in the posture of blessing. This image was considered the best and finest specimen of Pāla sculpture.[5]

[1] Annual Report of the Patna Museum for 1920-21.
[2] J & P.A.S.B. Vol. IV, p. 109. Supplementary Catalogue p. 65.
[3] Now in the Calcutta Museum No. 3824.
[4] Bloch—Supplementary Catalogue, p. 64-65.
[5] Ibid. p. 67, Pl. Xc.

There is one image, from Bodhgaya—of Mahattari Tārā—undated and belong to 3rd Catagory. There is an eighteen—armed female figure, seated cross-legged, on a lotus—throne. On the pedestal is a long but mutilated Inscription. It seems to be goddess Tārā.[1]

The fourth group of the images is very sublime, even to the extent of being un-natural. These are dated images. There is an image of Tārā, dedicated in the 2nd year of Rāma Pāla. There is an abnormal development of the bust and unnatural alterouation of the waist and the hips. The folds of the drapery, to have become conventional[2]

The Calcutta Museum contains a fine image of Khadira vāni Tārā. In the abnormal development of the bust, the attenuation of the waist and the hips and the conventionalisation of the drapery, this image is similar to the image of Tārā, dedicated in the 2nd year of Rāma Pāla.[3]

The entire sculpture is in a beautiful state of preservation. The goddess is seated in the धर्मचक्रमुद्रा. A female attendant is seated on her right and a thunder—bolt in her hand. On each side of the goddess rises a lotus in the stalks and above her head on either side is a Gandharva with a garland. The image was dedicated by a merchant named Jasadeva, son of the merchant Rājā, an inhabitant of Mathura.[4] A fine metal figure of Vajra Tārā was discovered at Patharghata in the Bhagalpur Distt.[5]

Thus we find a large number of images of Tārā and different forms of Bodhisattvas along with Vajra Tārā and Mārichi. In this period Tantrika Buddhism was predominant everywhere. The buddhist images are to be found in a large number and the majority of them are females. Besides these many miniature images of Tārā are also found from Nālandā and its surroundings.

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1. Anderson—Catalogue and Handbook, Pt. II, p. 76.
2. H.N. Shastri—Eastern Indian school, chapter III, p. 38.
3. Ibid. p. 39, Pl. Vc.
4. Supplementary Catalogue, p. 66, Pl. XVIId.
5. Buddhist Iconography, p. 123-26, Pl. 36b.

TĀRĀ IMAGES FROM MYSORE

Buddhism was a living religion between the 11th and 13th centuries in the Mysore state admits of no noubt whatever. The temple in which Nāgiyakka installed her image of Tārā was called, we are told 'Jayanti Pra-Banddha Vihāra'. This was accordingly the chief Bauddha Vihara in the Kadamba Kingdom of the time, the site of the chief Vihāra is still pointed out and it was on it, the image of Tārā was found by Mr. Rice. This temple fell a prey to the Muhammadan attacks soon after the close of 13th Cent. A.D.[1]

In 1065 A.D., during the time of the chalukya King Ahavamala, one of his ministers—Danda-nāyaka Rūpa Bhattayya, built the Jayanti Pra-Buddha Vihara at Baligami and made a grant of land for the worship of Tārā Bhagavati.[2] It is also stated in this Inscription that the images of Keshava, etc, belonging to the Tārā Bhagavati temple were made by him.

This image of Tārā Bhagawati was discovered by Mr. Rice some fifty years ago on the site on which the Buddhist Vihara stood at Baligami. This seems that the worship of Tārā was prevalent at Baligami (Mysore) in the 11th & 12th centry. Tārā is associated with a Bodhisattva who is represented as the deliverer of mankind. This image is a fine specimen of 12th Century sculpture.

The goddess is sitting on a lotus flower, her left leg is drawn, the right leg being let down and resting on the Buddhist Dharma chakra. She wears a highly ornamented crown, ear-rings with pendant chains neck and breast. the body is well shaped, full and delicate, the waist being narrow as becoming a beautiful goddess. The Prabhāvali which runs round the figures of the goddess, is partially broken. The image belongs to the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism.[3]

The guilt copper image received from Nepal—represents the Buddhist goddess Tārā. It is inscribed in Nepalese. The Inscription around the pedestal of the seated female figure states that the image was dedicated in the Nepal year 921 (A.D. 1801) by Totādhara Bāyudeva and his wife Tejo Rasmi.

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1. Mysore Gazetter, p. 151.
2. Ibid., p. 145-50.
3. E.C. VII—Shikarpur 170.
4. Archaeological Survey of Mysore 1915, p. 33, 69.

TĀRĀ FROM NEPAL

Tāntrism, a combination of profound mysticism and simple magic, was evolved in the great monasteries of Bihar and Bengal under the Pāla Empire (about A.D. 750 to 1150). The prestige of these monasteries, especially Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, was paramount throughout the Buddhist world—in India itself, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Java and the neighbouring country of Nepal. With the missionaries and pilgrims, the Pāla art, travelled especially in the form of portable objects, small bronzes and illustrated manuscripts. A group of some fourteen Pāla bronzes, dating from about A.D. 750 to 1150, and the six illustrated pages of the well-known manuscript Or. 6902, dated in the 15th year of Gopāla, are collected. In Nepal the impact of Pāla art, once felt, was overwhelming and permanent. This art, conservative and rooted in tradition, has always eluded precise dating. In any case, the collections in Nepal, with the exception of the Durbar Library, remain unexplored, and the art-historian has to be content to work with the few fine pieces available in India and the west.

It is debatable whether Nepalese and Tibetan metal sculpture can be included in a survey of Indian art. In my opinion the main inspiration of Nepalese metal sculpture having been derived from ancient Magadha (Bihar), it is legitimate to include Nepalese and Tibetan metal images in the category of Indian art. Hidebound geographical divisions have on occasion to be disregarded when they conflict with the current of cultural development round and about the borders of ancient Āryavarta. It is true that an increasing Mongol influence is to be discerned in Nepalese and Tibetan metal sculpture probably from the 14th century onwards, and yet Nepalese and Tibetan copper images are always more Indian in feeling than Chinese.

Research into Nepalese copper images has been negligible but some dated images are to be found which afford a basis for a broad stylistic classification. A word of warning should however be uttered with regard to dated images. The dedicatory inscription which contains the date is almost invariably on the pedestal (usually a lotus seat) of the image. All pedestals are detachable from the image which is either loosely fitted into the pedestal or riveted on to it. It requires considerable experience and careful examination to determine if the dated pedestal is the original *āsana* (seat) of the image or not. A number of images have dated pedestals which obviously are not the original *āsanas* of the image, and the novice is apt to arrive at the most fantastic conclusions if he relies merely on the incriptions on such pedestals.

Any criticism of Nepalese and Tibetan metal images from the aesthetic view-point has to recognise two shortcomings. The style in the main is rococo and the output too often just mechanical and on mass production lines. While these shortcomings are not to be seen in the earlier examples these features are most noticeable in the work of the 18th century onwards, though masterpieces have been created in every age. In this century commercial methods have led to a very marked deterioration in aesthetic standards, though work less than fifty years old is often of surprising technical excellence.

The earliest type of images such as the wellknown Bodhisattava Padmapāni of the Boston Museum[1] maintain a fine feeling for form and have a pronounced sense of volume. They are usually solid and not hollow cast, and not only the front of the image but also the back of the image is modelled to an approximate anatomical construction A feature of a large number of later period images is that they are hollow cast and the back of the image is quite flat with no attempt to approximate an anatomical construction. Very often the backs of such later images are crudely finished and the gold gilt which is applied to most Nepalese and Tibetan copper images is absent on the back. As the back would not be visible when the image was enshrined, later-day guilds working on a mass production basis found it to be a saving in time, expense, and trouble to leave the backs of the images in this crude unfinished stage.

Another feature which also appears to be a 17th or 18th century development is the technique of casting ornaments. crowns, scarves, girdles, and lotus flowers separately, and then fixing them to the image. This precemeal method of constructing an image is not confined to accessories only, because in numerous images. particularly large sized ones, the forearms are cast as separate units and then fitted into the elbow. Such images, of course, are always hollow cast. Even heads are at times separately cast and then fitted into the neck. the joint being covered by a broad necklacc. Almost all large images, and particularly those of the later period are hollow cast, but there are many small images even of late date which are solid cast.

The number of metal images in the temples and monasteries of Nepal and Tibet is reported to be very great indeed, but unfortunately no traveller has systematically photographed the available dated inscribed images and taken rubbings of the inscriptions. The result is that though dated images of the 17th and 18th centuries are known to exist in collections outside Nepal and Tibet, we seldom find images with incribed dates of an earlier period. It is true that pedestals bearing dates earlier than the 17th century. That Buddhism entered into Nepal at an early date is welknown though it was introduced into Tibet after the 7th century A.D. But at the same time there are no grounds for believing that the art of making metal images in Nepal and Tibet was practised, at any rate extensively, till about the beginning of the 13th century A.D. The Tibetan Lama Tārānātha writing about 1608 A. D. states that one Dhiman and his son Bitpalo were great artists of Varendra Northern Bengal in the reign of Devapala and that the father and son gave rise to distinct schools. As the son lived in Bengal, the cast images of gods produced by their followers were called the Eastern school, and in Nepal there grew up in course of time a peculiar Nepalese school of casting which resembled the Eastern school.

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[1] Fig. 276 in Coomaraswami's *History of Indian and Indonesian Art.*

Dhiman and Bitpalo worked in the reign of Devapala *circa* 815-853 A.D. and their style of work can be gauged with some accuracy. Nothing approximating their style of work[1] and made in Nepal or Tibet is to be found in any collection. But, no doubt, what Taranatha intended to convey was that the art of metal casting as practised in Nepal was traceable to the influence of the schools founded by Dhiman and Bitpalo. The schools founded by Dhiman and Bitpalo themselves underwent great changes in Bengal and Bihar as is well known to all students of Pala art. While it is possible that some metal images closely following the Pala style were cast in Nepal in the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. the influx of the artists of the Pala school into Nepal is not believed to have occurred till the Mohamedan invasion of Bengal at the end of the 12th century A.D. This invasion caused a state of panic amongst the Buddhist monks who were persecuted by the invaders. Prof. Tucci, a great authority on Tibet, is of the opinion that not only did the kings of Guge invite cultured men from India into their country, but that the immigration of Indian artists into Tibet was partly due to the desire to escape Moslem iconoclasm in India. Painters and sculptors from the ancient Buddhist universities of Eastern India migrated to the hospitable court of the kings of Guge. What is true of the immigration to Tibet is also true of the immigration to Nepal. In fact the art of casting in Nepal seems to have influenced the art of casting in Tibet. Bhattacharya[2] states that in a Tibetan text there is a statement that the art of Bengal is the best, next to it is the art of Nepal, and the worst is that of Tibet. This is not far from the truth. Thus all the available evidence indicates that the beginnings of the Nepalese school of metal sculpture must be sought in the 13th century.

Coomaraswamy's attribution of the Boston Museum Padmapāni, already referred to, and other images published by him in his *Catalogue of Indian Collections in the Boston Museum*, No. 5, to the 9th and 10th centuries A.D: is almost certainly incorrect. Those, who are familiar with the style of metal sculpture[3] in the reign of Rampala (1092-1134) in Bengal will immediately note that the markedly thick upper stalk of the lotus flower held by the Boston Museum Padmapani is a fairly source indication, amongst others, that the image cannot be earlier than the 12th century A.D. It was apparently the 12th century forms of art in Bengal which were carried over to Nepal in the 13th century A.D. It is reasonable to infer that in the beginning, the art of metal sculpture in Nepal was an

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1. Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Vol. 2, No. 2, pl. 28 figs. (1) & (2): pl. 29 fig. (2): pl. 30: pl. 31.
2. B. Bhattacharya, Buddhist Iconography, p. 7.
3. (a) Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Vol. 2, No. 2, pl. 35.
   (b) Banerji, Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture, pl. 5 figs. (b) and (c); pl. 17 fig. (c) gives examples of the stone sculpture of the Ramapala period. Taranatha does mention an earlier school in Nepal which resembled the school of the ancient West founded by Sringadhara, but nothing from Nepal of so early a date is known to us in the shape of metal images.

imitation of the 12th century tradtitions of Pala art because the workmen themselves were immigrants from Bengal. Now the 12th century work of Bengal implies sculpture of the Rāmpala period—which though rococo is very interesting—as well as the more lifeless roccco style which followed the Rāmpala period and which characterizes not only the last years of Pala rule but also the rule of the Senas in Bengal. Examples of this late Pala style made in Nepal in the 13th or 14th century A.D. may exist in Nepal itself, but none are known to exist. The Boston Museum Padmapani has certain characteristics of 12th century sculpture in Bengal such as the thick upper stalk of the lotus, and the prominent breasts, —seen in several male images of the later Pala period—yet at the same time it shows some Chinese influence in the face. This Chinese influence must have affected the style of metal casting as practised in Nepal by the immigrants from Bengal. After the influence from Bengal had itself absorbed Chinese influences. This fusion in all likelihood did not occur till the 14th century A.D. when a characteristic Nepalese school came into being. Therefore the Boston Museum Padmapani is not likely to be earlier than the 14th century A.D.[1]

The practice in Nepal of setting ornaments and crowns of images with semi-precious stones was also derived from late Pala art. The Kurkihar Avalokiteśvara of the reign of Rāmpala originally had its crown, ornaments and girdle set with gems. The practice of gilding Nepalese copper images is also borrowed from Pala metal sculpture where, gilded images are frequently met with. The general belief that Nepalese images set with gems are all of a very late period is erroneous because even the Boston Museum Padmapani's ornaments are gem-set, and the practice was quite obviously borrowed from the Pala metal images of the 12th century.[2]

There does not appear to be any clear cut line between Nepalese and Tibetan metal sculpture though the images of deified Lamas (priests and monks) are invariably Tibetan. It was in the second half of the 14th century A.D. that Tson-k'-a-pa, the reformer of the Lamaist doctrines which grew up in Tibet, introduced the belief of "living Buddhas", that is to say, Lamas into whose bodies were incarnated famous saints and even deities.[3] This doctrine was responsible for the creation of images of such deified Lamas. They are all of late date and none of them appear to be earlier than the 17th century A.D. According to Getty[3] the Tibetans bortowed the style of their statues from the 12th to the 14th century A.D. from Nepal, but that today Tibctan art dominates Nepalese artists. Taranatha writing in 1608 A.D. states that the latest artists have no special character, but strange to say makes no observation about Chinese influences in Nepalese metal images.

Though authentically dated images of an early period are not available, at any rate in collections outside Nepal and Tibet. But it is not always an easy matter to

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1. Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Vol. 2, No. 2, pl. 35.
2. Getty: The Gods of Northern Buddhism, p. XXXI.
3. Getty: The Gods of Northern Buddhism, p. XXXI.

arrive at definite conclusions with regard to the date of a Nepalese 'metal image. Images of the 18th century and after do not present much difficulty and one can with a fair amount of confidence recognise also 17th century images. But it is the images which differ from the 17th and 18th century types which are hard to date. In images where Chinese influence were blended. It may in a general way be said that the more marked the Chinese influence the later is the date of the image because images of the 17th and 18th centuries often iave a markedly Chinese type of countenance. A well-known example of this late type is the big seated Tārā of the South Kensington Museum[1] and another is the figure formerly in the collection of a Nepalese nobleman and reproduced by me in my *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. (Plate 348 Fig. 93) Two other well-known examples from the Calcutta Art Gallery have been reproduced by E. B. Havell[2], a Padmapani; and Plate 15, a Tara. The general characteristics of the late type of image mentioned are:

(1) The Chinese influence in the face, is somewhat Mongolian type of countenance. This cast of countenance is due to the exaggerated bow-shaped curve of the elongated upper eyelid and the manner in which the upper and lower eyelids are brought close together so that the eye-ball appears as a long and somewhat narrow slit.

(2) Sharply fashioned nose, the bridge being sometimes straight and sometimes curved. It is interesting to trace back this curved bridge of the nose to some of the 11th century frescoes of Mangnang in Tibet discovered by Tucci.[3]

(3) Small mouth with lips curving upwards at their corners. This upward curve of the lips is a characteristic derived from the 12th century Pala sculpture of Bengal and is prominent in the works of the reign of Rāmpala. But the tendency to make the mouth small in proportion to the face is a very typical Nepalese characteristic.

(4) In the female figures the breasts are circular with almost geometrical precision. They are not prominent and lack fullness. Moreover they are not placed close together. In what appears to be a pre-17th century image, namely an eight armed Tārā[1] from the Calcutta Art Gallery, the breasts are not precisely circular, and almost pressing against each other as in the Mangnans frescoes from Tibet. In the early Pala 9th century images of Bengal and Bihar, the breasts are full and heavy and placed close together, but in the late Pala period though the breasts are still full and heavy, they are often not placed close to each other. The early Pala idiom of breasts being placed close to each other was, of course, derived from Gupta sculpture where commonly the breasts were so closely set that they pressed against each other. In 17th and 18th century Nepalese and Tibetan metal sculpture one usually finds the breasts placed well apart, but it is not possible to say, in our present state of knowledge, when the fashion of making the breasts full and heavy and of placing them close together ceased.

1. Indian Art and Letters, Vol. 12, No. 1, pl. 3.
2. Indian Sculpture and Painting (1st Edition) 1908, Plate 5,
3. Modern Review, May 1938, Indian Art in Tibet.

(5) The surfaces of the face are smooth and tend to flatness. Even where the cheeks are well rounded, as in some images, the modelling of the face lacks true plasticity. This is an aspect more easily felt than described.

(6) In seated figures where the legs are crossed in the usual Dhyāni pose, the legs from the knees to the ankles are very woodenly treated and more or less shapeless. The above chracteristic will best be understood by comparing the Plate 5 of Havell's *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (1st edition), with the much earlier eight-armed Tārā on Plate 16 of the same book. Moreover when the drapery over the legs is indicated by a series of folds as in Fig. 4 the incised lines marking the folds are wide apart and the folds appear clumsy and lifeless. In contrast the hands are almost always beautifully fashioned.

(7) Ornaments, scarves, girdles, lotus flowers, and crowns are frequently cast separately and filled to the image. This is almost invariably the case in large images.

(8) The backs of the images are flat, crudely finished and not gilded while in the earlier period the plastic treatment of the back is usually commandable.

Nepalese metal images do on rare occasions achieve the distinction of being regarded as art of a high order both from the plastic point of view and the spiritual or intellectual content of the image. But Nepalese and Tibetan metal sculpture, in general, relies for its charm on suavity, eleganee and a fineness of execution which is reminiscent of a goldsmith's art. This suavity and elegance is mostly seen in female figures such as the various kinds of Tārās, who are often indistinguishable from one another.

Green Tārā, Right leg pendant. Right hand in *varada mudrā* (charity) and left hand in *vitarka mudrā* (argument). Urna on forehead, Five leaf crown. Height 23$^1/_2$ inches; width of base 19 inches. This is a particularly beautiful image of large size Hollow cast. The collarette and ear-rings do not appear to be original. The scarf is separately cast and fitted to the image as are also the armlets. The image is cast in two parts. The head and torso form one part while the body from the waist downwards forms another part. The joint where the two parts fit into one another is covered by the ornamented waist girdle. The figure is riveted to the pedestal which does not appear to be the original āsana. The forearms are also separately cast and fixed into the upper arms. The face is left more or less flat, and there is no gilt on the back. The front of the image was originally gilt though in parts the gilt has worn off. The eyes, nose, and lips, the modelling of the face, the method of casting, the unfinished flat back of the image, ths excessive ornamentation, and the treatment of breasts and legs all indicate its date as late 17th or 18th century A.D The Chinese influence in the face is very apparent. The ornaments are set profusely with semi-precious stones.

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1. Havell. Indian Sculpture and Painting, 1st Edition 1908, pl. 16,

The expression is one of great serenity with the vaguest of smiles which makes the face very beautiful indeed. As a rule large Nepalese and Tibetan images lack grace, but our image is both elegant and dignified in its pose. The face is of an unusual character in so far as it is much broader than the usual type of face prevalent in Tārā images of this period.

Tārā. The metal is an amalgam with brass predominating. Height 25$^1/_2$ inches including pedestal which is 4 inches high. A gracefully posed image even if the accentuation of form is somewhat overdone. The forearms from the elbow downwards are separately cast. The ornamentation is excessive and the crown very elaborate. It appears to be a Nepalese image of the 19th century A.D. The workmanship is definitely good, despite its late date but the face though not unpleasing is not very expressive. The left hand holds a lotus bud, the upper part of which is now broken.

Tārā with full blown lotus in left hand, and right hand in *varada mudrā*. Height 7$^3/^4$ inches. It is a solid cast Nepalese copper gilt image in which metal of a high quality has been used. The workmanship is also praiseworthy and typifies a certain class of Nepalese work which imparts the feeling that it is the product of a goldsmith cum sculptor. Every detail is precisely and tastefully tooled, and the image is most elegantly postured. The treatment of drapery bespeaks a practised hand. The breasts are very close together, an exception to the usual treatment of breasts in later day images. The pedestal is inscribed indicating a late 17th century date. The back of the image is modelled and the ornaments are gem studded. The gilt on the face is rubbed off revealing rich dark metal. The image though somewhat ornate is a very fine example of Nepalese craftsmanship.

Tārā. The image is as usual made of copper but only the ordaments, girdle, scarf, and crown, are gilt. The effect is both unusual and attractive. The image is solid cast. Height 21$^1/_2$ inches. It is contemporary with the Tārā (Fig. 10) and may be ascribed to the 19ts century A.D. Only the floral projection on the top of the crown is separately cast and fixed to the crown. Note the extremely high placement of breasts, which appears to be a characteristic of many female figures made in the 19th century A.D. The workmanship of the figure is very competent, but the expression of the face and the form in general lacks the sensitivity seen in the best 17th century and early 18th century Tārās. A very charming standing figure of Tārā is reproduced in *Rupam* No. 6 (frontispiece) by Coomaraswamy as a 12th or 13th century image. Salmony in the journal, *Eastern Art*, (Vol. 1. No. 4) has rightly pointed out that this figure cannot be earlier than the 16th century A. D. The beautiful Tārā on Plate 38 of Getty's *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, is also in all probability a 17th century image. There is a refinement in both these earlier Tārā figures which is absent in the images of the late 18th and 19th centuries A.D.

Four-armed Tārā. Solid cast. Copper gilt. The back is flat and not modelled. Height 7$^1/_2$ inches. A fine image of the late 17th or the early 18th century A.D. The stance is graceful the right leg being slightly bent and the drapery clinging to the figure is skilfully rendered.

Tārā. Repoussé plaque. copper gilt. Height 23 inches. The large pedestal and surrounding *prābhāmandala* are not contemporary with the plaque. The smaller pedestal and *prābhāmandala* are however part of the plaque itself. Though it is an 18th century image. It is feelingly conceived and expressure. A certain stiffness in parts of the figure is compensated for by digimty of poise and the treatment of face.

The goddess Tārā was enrolled among the northern Buddhist gods in the sixth century. By the 7th cent. according to Hiuen-tsang, there were many statues of her in Northern India, and between the eighth and 12th centuries her popularity equalled that of any god in the Mahāyāna pantheon. Many temples and Colleges were dedicated to her and there was hardly a household altar wthout a statue of Tārā. Tārā means "deliveress".

There are may legends in regard to origin of Tārā, one of them being that she was made from a blue ray that shone from the eye of Amitābha. The generally accepted legend, however, is that a tear fell from the eye of the god Avalokiteśvara, and falling in the valley heneath, formed a lake. From the waters of the Lake arose a lotus-flower, which opening its petals disclosed the pure goddess Tārā. The Lāmās believed that Tārā was incarnate in all good women.

The white Tārā (Pl. P. 97) symbolizes perfect purity and is believed to represent Transcendant wisdom, which secures everlasting bliss to its possessor. Her right hand is in the attitude of granting boons to the votaries and her left hand is placed between the breasts in the vitarka mudrā or the attitude of argument.

The following illustration (Pl. P. 99) represents Tārā, seated in an easy attitude. It is painted in greenish gold with its lips marked out in red, its eyes in white and eyebrows, eyelashes and pupils of eyes in black. The green Tārā is considered by the tibetans to be the original form of Tārā.

"She is represented seated on a lotus throne, the right leg pendant, with the foot supported by a small lotus, the stem of which is attached to the lotus-throne. She is slender and graceful in her pose which is somewhat more animated than that of the white Tārā. She is dressed like a Bodhisattva.[1]

'Her hair is abundant and wavy' Her right hand is in 'Charity' mudrā and her left,

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1. Masterpieces of Indian Sculptenes—p. 98.

which is in 'argument' mudrā, holds the blue lotus presented in profile. "The utpala [blue lotus] is represnted either with all the petals closed or the ceentral petals closed, while the outside rows are turned back."[1] The above—(P-100) is another figurine of Tārā. The blue lotus is here represented full-blown.

In Mahāyāna of Vajrayāna Buddhism, Tārā is the goddess of compassion, offspring of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of mercey. This masterpiece in copper-gilt exhibits delicate and refind modelling and the figure is shown seated in a confortable and graceful attitude in the Sulkhāsana pose with one leg folded and the other pendant, a pose of ease and comfort.

A statue of Tārā into a house corner not far from the Darbār squace at Kātmandu.[2] Posture, moddling of the body, costume and jevellry are none of the traditional Indian type, one hand in varada Mudrā, the other holding the stalk of a lotus, the sweet and rather face and finally the flaming mandola speaks for the older Buddhist traditions. It seems to be earliest examples of Nepalese Bronze art.

A Nepalese princess, Bhrkuti (Bri-btsun) married to Tibetan King srong-bdsan-sgmtpo A.D. 639. Her influence on the tibetans was so beneficial that she was later venerated as an incarnation of the goddess Tārā (green-Tārā).

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1. Master pieces of Indian Sculptures, p. 170.
2. Ibid.

TĀRĀ IN TIBET

Tārā, the Merciful One, is born from a tear of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the Merciful Lord. She symbolizes compassion and guides the travellers across the infinite ocean of transmigrations. She is Tārā, the brilliant one, the star that guides the navigator on his voyage. Together with Avalokiteśvara she is the protector of mankind, and when invoked, saves people from multitudes of dangers. She is the Princess Bhattārikā, and as such wears the princely attire of a Bodhisattva. Her favourite residence is Mount Potala, from whose heights she looks over the suffering of this world.

Tārā is the principle feminine deity of Buddhism of later days. With the spreading of Śivaistic influences among Buddhists, numerous other goddesses of the Hindu pantheon were admitted into the religicus system of the Mahāyāna; and, with the advent of a strong current of religious syncretism, they were proclaimed to be different aspects of Tārā, the Saviouress. Under the influence of pious adoration, her character gradually transformed itself and she assumed the aspect of a Goddess Mother, the Mother of all the jivas (Tib. rGyal-yum), as she is addressed in prayers and songs composed in her honour.

The Buddhist iconography of Tibet knows twenty-one forms of Tārā. Tārā adopts the five sacred colors and her ardent devotee, the Kasmirian poet Sarvajnamitra, tells us that the merciful goddess can be seen red as the sun, blue as the sapphire, white as the foam of the ocean, or brillian as the sparkling of gold. And the same poet sings in the cecestasy of his devotion: Thy universal form is similar to the crystal which becomes transformed in its aspects when things round it are changed.

To each Dhyāni-Buddha corresponds an aspect of Tārā with her ritual color :

Dhyāni-Buddhas.	Tārās.	Color.
1. Akṣobhya	Locanā.	blue.
2. Ratnasambhava.	Māmaki.	yellow, gold
3. Vairocana.	Vajradhātvisvari.	white.
4. Amitābha.	Pāndarā.	rose
5. Amoghasiddhi.	Tārā	green.

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1. Early Indian'seculptures from Nepal.
2. A, Getty—Pl. 38.
3. P.H. Pot —Tibetan Painting.

The green aspect of Tārā is one of the most popular ones. P.H. Pott's collection (painting No. 22) possesses a slightly damaged image of the green Tārā, surrounded by the Dhyāni-Buddha Amitābha and the god of riches, Jambhala. She is always seen seated on a lotus-throne emerging from the waves of the ocean. Her right hand is making the sign of charity, the left one is holding the flower of the blue lotus, for she is called in stotras (nilotpalakarā devi). She sits in the royal fashion, the right leg hanging down from the throne. This form of Tārā is regularly met on the paintings representing the parivāra of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

On the painting representing the mandala of Amoghapāśa-Lokesvara, which was described above, this aspect of Tārā, is the saviouress from the eight perils of this world.

Painting No. 23 represents the white aspect of Tārā. The goddess is sitting on a lotus throne, making the sign of charity with her right hand. She is holding a flower.

Tārā is greatly venerated in Tibet. The two queens of the famous Srongtsan sgam-po were considered, as incarnations of Tārā. The Nepal princess is Tārā under green aspect, and the Chinese imperial princess is goddess Tārā under her white form.

TANKĀ

The tankā represents a goddess, entirely similar to the usual representation of sGrol ma: her right hand is in varada mudrā, in the left she holds a lotus, but her left hand also holds a vase; around her, twenty similar images of the same goddess. Above, in a palace, Byams pa in bhadrāsana and below two Buddhas. The vase is the symbol of Vasudhārā, the goddess of riches, but when it is Vasudhāra's symbol, it is held in the left hand and ears of corn issue from the vase. The fact that 21 images of the same goddess are represented, reminds us of the cycle of the 21 Tārās (see Indo-Tibetica, II, part II, p. 158 ff.). Above the head we see the image of a Buddha, i.e. Amoghasiddhi, whose emanation is the Tārā goddess.

But a more accurate determination is possible: Dipankara Atisa, whom Tibetan tradition considers one of the formost propagators of sGrol ma's cult in the Country of Snows, wrote a hymn dedicated to this goddess and widely commented upon by Tibetan scholars. In this hymn, containing brief descriptions of the goddess, she is always imagined in the same form, with her right hand in the attitude of presenting a gift and her left holding a lotus flower. However in her 21 different manifestations, which have different colours, the goddess carries on the palm of her right hand the bum pa, the vase, as in our tankā. Hence there is no doubt that the tankā represents Tārā, in her 21 forms, exactly as they are described in Atisa's above mentioned hymn.

In course of time Tārā became one of the most popular deities of Tibet, particularly after dogmatics had assimilated Tārā's two principal forms, the white and the green one, to the two wives of Srongtsan sgam po, himself the incarnation of spyan ras gzigs. But Tārā cult was widely diffused only in the period of the second propagation of the faith. Moreover, we have every reason of supposing this goddess to be of a comparatively late origin. She does not appear in Buddhist canonical literature; Hsuan Tsang mentions Ta la Pu sa, without alluding to the divinity's sex. The first mention we find of Tārā is in the Mahāvairocanasūtra, translated into Chinese by Subhākarasimha (who arrived in China in 724 and died in 735) and commented upon by I Ching, a pupil of Subhākarasimha and Vajra-bodhi, who died in 727. In that text Āryatārā is said to be an emanation of Avalokitesvara. Her compassionate nature is already alluded to in the commentary on chapter 5 where her name is related to: tārā "pupil . . .

The Manjuśrimūlakalpa' vol. I. p. 65 calles her Āryāvalokitesvarakarunā, outright, and is probably right. Avalokitesvara is the Buddha's compassionate look, diffused over all the

1. Taisho, XVIII, n. 868, p. 7 a.
2. Taisho, vol. XXXIX, n. 1796, p. 632 a-b.
3. Taisho vol. XX, 1101, p. 430.

points of space to save suffering creatures; it is the divine look, inspecting the world from the Tusita heaven, to find the most appropriate place for the accomplishment of his mission of redemption from sin and pain; it is the look turning down to explore the Hells and pouring out the solace of its pity every time the eyes are turned; thus the anonymous poet of the Karaṇḍavyūha exalts it. Tarā is the active power of this pity, the force of compassion, saving (tārayati) suffering creatures.

Naturally this initial process does not stop; as soon as Avalokita's active pity was deified, a new process began. She is the Buddha's mother, the Great Mother. Then, in Vajrayāna Tārā breaks up, is refracted in manifold derived forms; the adoring goddesses of her cycle are considered as many forms of Tārā; we shall thus no longer have a Puspa, a Dhūpa etc., but a Puspatārā, a Dhūpatārā, and so forth. On the other hand, the identification with the Great Mother just alluded to made it easy to take a further step. Tārā's identification with the adamantine essence, the Vajra=Dharmatā=absolute of the Vajrayāna: she then became Vajratārā. Thus her iconography was retouched, to translate into new symbolical forms, the aspects conceived by ritual and liturgical compilations. Next the gooddess became a centre of attraction for endless mystic intuitions of various date and origin.

Some have assinged to Tārā an original relation with water almost as if she were a goddess of navigation, this cannot be proved; it is a secundary aspect, water being only one of the perils the goddess saves her devotees from; her relation with water is a consequence of her fundamental character as Avalokitesvara's compassionate power, which delivers her believers from fears of all sorts. She is the embodiment of a divine virtue, which having taken a certain form, attracts and concentrates in itself manifold other religious intuitions,

This also rules out Tārā's birth outside India, in Tibet or Ladakh, as H. Shastri suggests; the villages of Tar in Ladakh, or of Miru, have no relation whatever either with Tārā or with Mount Sumeru.

This assimilation of Tārā to aboriginal deities took place in a second period, when Buddhist missionaries began to preach in lands, where Śākyamuni's word had not yet reached. There is no doubt that this was the case with Ekajatā. There is no reason for disbelieving the Sādhanamālā which states that Tārā cult was taken by Nāgārjuna from the Bhota, provided this Nāgārjuna be taken as the tantric writer, not the great philosopher. That story coincides with the Brahmanic tradition concerning Tārā's origin from Mahācina and with the statement in the Svatantratantra, that Nilasaravasti lives in lake Cholana, West of Mount Sumeru.

In this case we are met with a terrific deity, later assimilated with Ugratārā, one of the goddesses of the Himalayan regions from which the Indians took for instance, the Lama

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1. Hirananda Shastri, The Origin and Cult of Tārā, Masi, n. 20.

and many other intuitions and liturgics as proved, for instance, by the Yāmalatantra and other tantric texts.

Thus Tārā has been reflected in manifold refractions; casual analogies discovered by popular imagination and the scholars have proclaimed them to be various epiphanies of the same divine force; thus were born her eight forms, her 21 hypostases and the litanies of her 108 names, which are not only epithets and invocations, but lists of the local aspects of the goddess.

These convergences of aboriginal cults into Tārā's complex type, although they modified the goddess's primitive character and brought her near to the Magna Mater's endless forms, necessarily took her outside the Buddhist community and introduced her into Śaivaite circles. This happened in one of the periods most favourable to the fusion of different religious intuitions: the epoch which saw gnostic schools in full flower and the meeting between Buddhist and Śaivaite esoterism, accomplished in the Siddhas' sect.

At that time Tārā migrated into the Śaivaite schools: the Rudrayāmala-tantra mentions her epiphany in the Mahācina country while Śākta and Śaiva make her the equal of the devi and of the power of God.

1. sGrol ma (Tārā), Sixteenth century, Bronze, with paint; H. $8^{1}/_{4}$ in., Tibet House Collection, New Delhi.

sGrol ma, or Tārā, is the consort of Avalokitesvara and is a very popular goddess in both Nepal ond Tibet. Her popularity in Tibet is rivaled only by that of Lha mo, and her worship dates from the early years of Buddhism in the seventh century, when the two wives of King Srongtsangampo were apotheosized and worshipped as two forms of Tārā. It is further believed that two principal forms of Tārā, distinguished by white or green complexions and the white or blue lotuses they hold, were created from two tears from Avalokitesvara's eyes. In this image we see her white form, when she is known as sGrol dkar, and she holds the white lotus. That the image was inspired by a Nepali original is evident from both the modeling and the physiognomy. In its rich ornamentation, however, it is far more exuberant and "baroque" than anything seen in Nepal, and clearly reflects the gay and spirited temperament of the Tibetan. At the same time, Chinese influence seems to be apparent in the way the scarf falls over the shoulders and wraps the arms, and in the rich, brocade-like design of the garment.

2. *Stele of a seated Tārā; Embodiment of Divine Motherhood. Mediaeval Period, IXth cent A.D.* 34 *in H. Black Stone.*

This figure, as presented by the images, is obviously a female deity, and yet the deities of East Indian Buddhism are sexless. Oftentimes, however, they are depicted with certain attributes which make them dual in character. The difficulty of portraying the dual form of the two sexes would readily be recognized by a sculptor when trying to create a single figure of artistic merit. Very ingeniously, therefore, he ordinarily solved the matter, when the need arose, by placing a woman's ear-ring in one ear and a man's ear-ring in the other, as was done in this case. In the right ear is the plug-like ear-ring worn by women. In the left ear (the lobe of which is broken) there was a pendant ear-ring of the type worn by men. Iconographically, in this particular figure the Tārā is conceded to be a female deity; in fact referred to as the Saviouress, and Divine Mother. Full-busted and of sturdy mien she sits upon a lotus throne, the left leg bent at the knee in the East Indian position of ease, and the right leg pendant with the right foot resting upon the "lotus throne of the world. Her right hand is placed on her knee with the palm outward. This is the mudrā, or magic gesticulation, known as the gesture of charity. In her left hand she clasps the stem of a blue lotus which is shown in profile at shoulder height. The blue lotus attribute connects the Tārā directly with the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, whose feminine energy she represents.

Above the seated figure and carved almost in the round are two miniature Buddhas on lotus pedestal; and also two lines of incised inscription, the translation of which is unavailable. It has been suggested that this inscription is a dedicatory one; it is completed on the base of the pedestal at the left. Under the lotus pedestal on which the Tārā is seated are two lions, who appear to support it, and a miniature figure close to the pendant foot, which may represent the donor of the stele, a devotee of the goddess who, from under the throne, looks up at her in ardent admiration. Incorporated into one side of the throne-like pedestal is a Deva-like figure, four-armed, militantly bearing a sword suggesting, perhaps, Buddhism militant, guarding its tenets from all encroachments.

Around the Tārā's neck is a three-strand necklace. She has beautiful armlets, heavy wire bracelets, and jeweled anklets. She wears a transparent sārī, with a beautiful pattern suggested. This garment is caught at the waist with an elaborate belt, the buckle of which is a cabochon decorated ornament. One end of the sari crosses the breasts and is thrown in a graceful loop over the left shoulder. The hair is beautifully suggested, piled in a coiled chignon which is secured by a jeweled fillet having an elaborate cabochon ornament in the front from which hangs a forehead ornament.

This stele or memorial slab, has a background which is appropriately decorated with a border based upon a delightful lotus motif.

3. (*M.*) *noghoghan dara eke* (*the green mother Tārā*). *Symbol*: *uptala* (*blue lotus, closed*). *Śakti of Avalokiteśvara.*

The green Tārā is considered by the Tibetans to be the original Tārā. In fact, the Tibetan name for the goddess is dongon, which 'the original Tārā'; but ngon (original) has been confused by the ignorant lamas with sngo. meaning 'green' (or blue), and the epithet 'green' has become inseparable for this form of Tārā, which symbolizes the Divine Energy.

She is represented seated on a lotus-throne, the right leg pendant, with the foot supported by a small lotus, the stem of which is attached to the lotus-throne. She is slender and graceful in her pose, which is somewhat more animated than that of the white Tārā. She is dressed like a Bodhisattva and wears the thirteen ornaments, and usually the five-leaved crown (Pl. XXXVII, figs. a and c).

Her hair is abundant and wavy. Her right hand is in 'charity' mudrā, and her left, which is in 'argument' mudrā, holds the blue lotus presented in profile.

The utpala is represented either with all the petals closed or the central petals closed, while the outside rows are turned back. The artists, however, do not always follow tradition, and sometimes erroneously give the green Tārā, the full-blown lotus of the white Tārā (Pl. XXXVIII). She may be represented 'Simhanāda', that is to say, that her lotus-throne is supported by a roaring lion (Pl. XXXVII, fig. b). The goddesss may also be represented with a small image of Amoghasiddhi in her head-dress, both when alone or as a Śakti, and she usually has the urna on her forehead.

If represented in company with several gods, she is usually at the left of the principal god, but in miniatures, is sometimes at the right of Avalokitesvara. She may be accompanied by eight green Tārās or only by her manifestation, Ekajatā, and the goddess Marīcī, or by Jānguli and the goddess Māhāmayurī.

In the latter case she is called Dhanadā, 'giver of treasures', and has four arms. The upper normal ones make the usual mudrā, while the other two hold a lasso and elephant-goad.

The green form of the Jānguli-Tārā has four arms and holds Tantra symbols. The 'Tārās of the four Dreads' is a group of four ferocious Tārās, of which, unfortunately, the author has been unable to find either examples or description.

The titles of the twenty-one Tārās, according to Mr. Waddell, are the following:

1. Tārā—the supremely valiant.
2. Tārā—of white-moon brightness.
3. Tārā—the golden coloured.
4. Tārā—the victorious hair-crowned.
5. Tārā—the 'Hun' shouter.

6. Tārā—the three world best worker.
7. Tārā—suppressor of strife.
8. Tārā—Bestower of supreme power.
9. Tārā—the best providence.
10. Tārā—dispeller of grief.
11. Tārā—cherisher of the poor.
12. Tārā—brighty glorious.
13. Tārā—universal nature worker.
14. Tārā—with frowning brows.
15. Tārā—giver of prosperity.
16. Tārā—subduer of passions.
17. Tārā—supplier of happiness.
18. Tārā—excessively vast.
19. Tārā—dispeller of distress.
20. Tārā—Realization of spiritual power.
21. Completely perfect Tārā.

In Tibetan temple banners, the Green Tārā may be figured surrounded by a double rainbow glory in which are represented the group of twenty-one Tārās, of which ten are white, five are red, five are yellow, and in the centre is the Green Tārā. In the corner of the painting to the right is the White Tārā 'of the Seven Eyes'; to the left is the goddess Ushnishavijayā. In the lower right-hand corner is the Dharmapāla.

4. The tankā represents tārā, in her manifestation well-known by the name of 'Śyāma Tārā, in tibetan sGrol Ljan, green Tārā, The two hands are, one in the attitude of presenting a gift, and the other in the attitude of protection. In her left hand a lotus; on oneside the image of Ral gcig ma, of a blue colour, with the skull-cap and the knife with handle in the form of a rdo rje; on the other side Mārīchi', of a yellow colour.

The gooddess is seated on a lotus resting in its turn on a throne; throne and image are placed in the interior of a heavenly palace. Above, to signify the goddess's spiritual descent and the mystical plane to which she belongs, there is a small figure of Amitābh: This form of Tārā is his emanation. Along the outer edges of the Tank, various manifestations of the same goddess or images of kindred deities. Six figures below, and two more on a level with

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1. Tibetan Painted Scrolls—Vol. II—P, 403.

her shoulders, signify the Tārā's eight forms, invoked by devotees to ward off the eight deadly perils; fire, water, thieves etc. See Tanka No 36). The goddess always in the same mudrā, touches with her right hand the head of a man who has run to her for aid. Behind her, symbols of perils; the elephant, the tiger, the demon etc. Above on the left, Kurukullā, red, six-armed, between two attendants which are Tārā's secondary forms,[1] on the right other feminine deities, eight-armed, attended by two acolytes, perhaps yosis su snin parbyed ma.[2] Below is Vasudharā six-armed.

On the left another female figure, twelve-armed and three-headed, representing therefore sToir ka ZLa, one of Tārā's 21 forms. (Indo-Tibetica Vol. II - Pt II P 158), to the right, under the small images of Tārā, who protects from perils, Brahmā with his acolytes on a swan and Me Lha on a rawi to the right a two-armed goddess with acolytes, and C'u on a makara.

5. Its subject is again sGrolma, Tārā, the goddess of salvation. She is seated on a lotus, wearing rich draperies. As her colour is green, the picture clearly represents Khadira Vānī Tārā, whom tibetan call sGrol ejan as well, that is greeṇ Tārā. Under the image is written in tibetan and in Mongol.

Namo ārya taraye/

Honour to Ārya Tārā.

On each side of the goddess stand two figures;[3] according to the Inscription, they are 'Od Zer can, Mārichī) on the right and Ral gcig ma (Ekjatā) near whom are seen eight mC' od pai lha now, lweding fly-whisps and carrying gifts. Date of the tankā is 1854. Though it was bought in Nepal but it is clear that it comes from some locality in Mongolia, or in Tibet on the frontier of Mongolia.

6. In a heavenly vimāna sits a female deity; wearing a crown of skulls; round her waist a band from which hang human heads freshly severed. She has eight arms, which bear the Khaṭvānga, the skull-cap, damaru, and the gri gu, the trident and the noose,, all symbols of the terrific deities. The two principal hands have the same posture as those of sGrol dkar, and she is seated in the same way as this goddess, For this reason there seems to be no doubt that this figure must be recognised as one of many manifestations of sGrolma, the goddess of salvation.

7. This Tankā is dedicated to Kurukullā. She is another of India's many tribal deities. The fact that some sādhanā call her oḍḍīyāna-udbhavā, risen in uddiyāna, that another is attributed to Indrabhuti, that among the goddesses of her Mandala Vajragaāndhārī is found,

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1. See Bhattacharya Iconography, p. 51.
2. Indo-Tibetica Vol. II, Prt. II, p. 158.
3. Tibetaṇ Painted Serolls—Vol. II—P- 539.

induces us to think that she may have originated in the North-Western regions of India. Having entered the vajrayāna pantheon late, she was assimilated to Tārā, and hence some call her the red Tārā. She is particularly invoked in magic operations, to touch the heart of beloved or fear-inspiring persons, like Tārā, she also passed into Hinduisms, and her name is found among the thousand epithets of Devi (see Lalita shasra nāma).

The goddess stands dancing on a lotus, which blooms in the middle of a mountain landscape, i.e. the Kurukullā mountain. She has four hands like Tārodbhavā and Uddiyāna Kurukullā; in the left hand she holds the bow and a red-lotus flower; the right hand clasps an arrow and pulls the bowstring. She is the goddess of red colour.

In the Mahāyanic pantheon we may observe, besides the various dhyāni buddhas and bodhisattvas, their energies or śaktis, represented as female beings, the Tārās. They have the appearance of princesses, with their hair done up in tall wreath and ornamented with a diadem, and further wearing ear-rings, cords across their breast, and rings on their arms, wrists, and ankles. The upper part of the body is bare, the lower part is covered by a cloth, held in place by an ornamented girdle. The type as a whole bears great resemblance to Laksmi or Śri, the wife of Viṣṇu, and representative of the ideal type of queen.

Dress and ornaments resemble those of the bodhisattvas to such a degree, that it is often hard to make out whether a certain figure is a bodhisattva or a Tārā. This is made even more difficult by the Indian ideal of beauty, which tends to make all forms rounded, thus obscuring what we consider to be typically male characteristics. It is not easy to mention a definite distinguishing mark, especially one that could class a figure as a bodhisattva. The reverse, identification as a Tārā is sometimes made easy by the figure's prominent breast and the typical form of the female breastcords.

The Tārās are usually seated on a lotus throne, with the right leg hanging down, the foot being supported by little cushion. The right hand rests on the right knee in a special pose, the left is raised before the breast in vitarka-mudrā, holding the stalk of a lotus, the flower of which is visible beside the left shoulder. Sometimes this flower bears the attribute by which the Tārā can be recognized.

The above particularly applies to the fixed group of Tārās, who belong to the specific dhyāni-buddhas. They may be summarized as follows:

direction	*Dhyāni-buddha*	*tārā*	*colour*	*Symbol*
Centre	Vairocana	Vajradhatvisvari Locanā	white	Cakra
E	Akṣobhya	Locanā	blue	vajra
S	Ratnasambāva	Māmaki	yellow	ratna
W	Amitābha	Pāndarā	pink	padma
N	Ạmoghasiddḥa	Śyama Tārā	green	visvavajra

In Tibetan art these figures are relatively infrequent; the collection possesses one series, which perhaps depicts them (2740/45-50), although in that case it would be with many deviations.

The Thankas show a series of Tārās depicted in the usual manner, with their right hands in abhayamudrā, and with the following attributes on the lotus beside their left shoulder: cakra, vajra, conch, wishing-tree, Viśvavajra, and umbrella. There is no accordance whatever between their colour and the scheme outlined in the diagram above. In addition there is an obvious bipartition within the group, as there is clearly a difference between the facial expression. Three of the six figures have the normal i.e. the other three have the peaceful expression, wild, fierce, contorted faces of the śaktis of the mystic buddhas. Among these one has an additional third eye in her forehead. In view of these peculiarities, the group can not be identified with certainty.

Much more familiar to iconography are the two Tārās who mostly occur together, the White Tārā and the Green Tārā, who are said to have been incarnated in the two wives of king Sron-gtsan-sgam-po. The White Tārā in the Chinese "princess" Wen-chun, the Green Tārā in the daughter of king Amśuvarman of Nepal Attempts have been made to find a connection between the colour of Tārā and the complexion of the two princesses, but it is highly improbable that actually any such connection existed.

The Green Tārā entirely conform to the described type; her right hand rests on her right knee in varadamudrā, and second holds a lotus, which rises up beside her right shoulder. On unpainted bronzes, the presence of the two lotuses, is one of her most easily recognizable distinguishing features.

The White Tārā can readily be identified by two other characteristics. In the first place, she is never seated with one leg hanging down, but always with both leg doubled under her body. Secondly, she has seven eyes, i.e. apart from the normal pair of eyes, and a third one in her forehead, she also has eyes in the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet. This peculiarity is unmistakable.

Both the Tārās are extremely popular in art, and both frequently occure as bronzes. Togther they often have a place as subsidiary figures on thankas occupying corresponding position on either sides of the main figures.

GODDESS TĀRĀ IN JAVA

Towards the end of the 8th century (about A.D. 780), Tantrism spread to Java where Chandi kalasan dedicated to the Buddhist deity Tārā was built by the Shailendra Emperor '*Pananikaran*' under the inspiration of his preceptor Kumāraghosha of Bengal. While the Chandi-Kalasan is one the most elegantly decorated temples in the islands of Java, the life-size bronze image of Tārā, that was installed in it by the Gauda Rajguru and that is now lost, must have been exceedingly beautiful.

Thirteenth century Java saw a revival of Buddhist Tantrism in the reigns of Kings Kritanagara and Ādityavarman. The formar who ascended the throne in 1268 AD, erected a Tantrik temple at Tago. The central figure here is Amoghpāsa; while among his attendents are Tārā, Sudhana Kumar, Bhrikuti and Hayagriva.

The first Buddhist inscription dated AD.778 found near the village of Kalasan in central Java, is remarkable for several reasons. It records the construction of a temple dedicated to the goddess Tārā, together with a dwelling for the Bhikshus. It says that the temple of Tārā was founded by a king,designated as the ornament of the Sailendra dynasty.

The Sailendras were the rulers of Sri Vijaya, a mighty kingdom comprising Sumatra, Jāvā and Malay Peninsula. They were zealous Buddhists and founded viharas sometimes not only in their own dominions but even at Nalanda and at Negapatam on the coast of coromandal.[1] There is the profusely decorated Chandi kalasan which in all probability is identical with the temple of Tārā.

Like Māhāyāna Buddhism, Tantrism spread far beyond the boundaries of India. Nepal, Tibet and Burma would easily come under the ambit of Buddhist Tantrism, due to the facilities of communication across the Himalayan passes to Nepal and Tibet and the routes to upper Burma through Kāmarupa and Arakan. From Burma, the discovery of images of Tārā along with lokanātha, Avalokiteshwar and Maitreya in Pagan, proves the spread of of Tantrik Buddhism. This is also confirmed by the Tibetan texts. Dr. N. R. Ray has discovered a life-like standing image of lokanātha, accumpanied by Tārā and Hayagriva, represented in line and colour on the right wall of the entrance vestibale of the Khyaubankkyi Pagoda, pagan.[1]

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1. J. P. Vogel, Buddhist art in India, ceylon & Java P. 90-91, 103.

TĀRĀ IN CHINA AND JAPAN

In Japan several goddesses of the Mahāyāna pantheon are worshipped. In both China and Japan the male principle alone is considered of prime importance, since no woman, without gaining masculinity through re-incarnation, can enter Sukhāvati, the paradise of Amida.

In Japan Tārā is found more often in temple banners than in statues, and is little worshipped. The Japanese believe that Tārā made two vows; to conquer evil (as green Tārā) and to save human beings (as white Tārā). There is, however, in Japan, but one form of the goddess. She holds the lotus, and may be making 'charity' and 'argument' mudrā, or have the hands folded. Her colour is a whitish green, and she never has eyes on the palms of her hands or the soles of her feet like the Tibetan white Tārā. She holds the blue lotus or the kichi-jo-kwa (pomegrante), which is believed, as in India, to be the symbol of fecundity.

In China her worship is practically unknown, although Hsuan Tsang mentions a statue of the goddess Tārā, 'of great height and endowed with divine penetration', and says that on the first day of each year, kings, ministers, and powerful men of the neighbouring countries brought flower-offerings of exquisite perfume. The religious ceremonies lasted for eleven days with great pomp and show.

In China the only feminine divinity whose popularity equalled the masculine deities was the goddess Kuan-yin. She was, however, not worshipped as the consort of Avalokiteśvara, but as a feminine manifestation of the god himself, for a specific purpose—as was also the goddess Kwan-non in Japan.

The worship of the śakti was never adopted in China or Japan. The only representations of a god in yab-yum attitude are found in the few Lama temples still existing in China.

Under Buddhist influence, the cult of Tārā became very populer in China. She is the Śakti or female counterpart of repository of energy of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteswara. She is conceived as Saviour and the Mother of Mercy. She passed out of India to Tibet and was known as 'Sgrol-ma or Dolma' in the Tibetan translation. Like her husband Avaloksiteśwara she was conceived under various forms. The Tārā cult, with the Goddess in her various forms, also went to China as the Śakti of Avolokiteśwara.

Avalokiteśwara, in China was transformed into a Goddess—(Pre-Buddhist Mothers) in the 8th cent. A.D. Tārā also became absolutely merged into the husband, Kuan yin the goddess. This double form of Tārā became very popular in China.

1. N. N. Bhattachrya,—The Indian Mother Goddess p. 203-5.

In the Indian tradition, Vāmāchāra is known as ChināChāra. The Goddess Tārā has connections with China and Tibet and of Vāmā Chāra practices. Tantric texts like the महाचीनाचारक्रम, ब्रह्मयामल, रुद्रयामल and मेरुतन्त्र etc. make catogorical statements that the worship of Tārā and Vāmā Chāra practices were form brought China—by Vaśistha.

The living faiths of Tibet, Nepal, China, Mongolia and Japan and of Further India and Indonesia still bear the impress of the metaphysical notions, meditative practices and use of Mantras, yantras and mudrās of medieval Indian Tantrism. While sculptures, banners, wall-paintings and Mandales reproduce in distant foreign lands the philosophy and iconography of Indian Tantrika images. From the 8th to 15th centuries the Buddhist as well as Brahmanical Tantric religion and art of Bengal seemed to have grately influenced Tibet, China and South East Asia, Central Asia and later reaching Japan at the beginning of the 9th Century.

Everywhere it was the Sādhanā of Buddhist Tantrism which provided presemptions for the sculptors to construct the images of deities and formulae of meditation and worship. The Indian Sādhanamālā comprises no less than 312 Sādhanās giving details of attributes and adornmants of the Tantrika images. The Vajrayāna Śaktis were once found in considerable numbers throughout Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and Nepal, Tibet and Indonesia.

The entire Tantric literature is divisible into two broad categories; the orthodox, represented by the Āgamas, the Yāmalas with their supplements and the Samayāchāra. The Heterodox Tantrism represented by the texts of Vajrayāna. Sahajayāna, the Vāmāchāra and the Kulāchāra.

The Hevajra Tantra, an important Vajrayāna text, older then 8th cent. A. D. mentions four important Śakti peethas or seats of Tantrism.

1. *Uddiyāna* in the Swat vally, that counects India with Bulkh and Khotan.
2. *Jālandhar*—between Nepal and Kashmir, which connects India with Tibet through the Shipki pass.
3. *Purnagiri*—cannot be identified clearly.
4. Kāmarūpa—or Brahmaputra Valley that connects India with both, Southern and Western China through North Burma. All the Peethas are situated on the main routes to Tibet and China.

The Rudra Yāmala Tantra (Patala XVII) definitety mentions Mahā-Chinā as one of the sacred regions that should be visited for the objective of Mahāsiddhi. The Kubjikā-Tantra is of foreign derivation-also mentions Mahā-china Tantra. The Tārā Tantra similarly declares that the cult of China-Tārā, came from the country of Mahā-china. It was visited by sage vashistha in order to obtain his initiation in Sākta Dikshā. P.C. Bagchi finds a close agreement between the Sādhanās of Mahā china-Tārā and Ekajata, and regards these goddesses as identical. Thus the Hindu goddesses Tārā, ugra Tārā, Śyāmā, and Mahā-Nila Saraswati are derived from China where they were worshipphed as chinakrama Tārā or Mahā-china-Tārā. Hiuen tsang refers to a statue of the goddess Tārā in China of great Height and endowed with divine penetration. According to the Sādhanmālā, Ekajata or Nila Saraswati and Parnaśāvari or Green Tārā, whose images are to be found from Nālandā and Vikrampur, are along with Mahā-china-Tārā, emanations of Akshobhya. The priest of the cult was Siddha-Nāgārjuna who perhaps took the name of the sage vasistha in order to hide his Buddhist derivation. The Sammohana Tantra, which was discovered by P. C. Bagchi in Nepal and which was taken to Combodia in the beginning of the 9th cent. A.D. from North India (possibly emposed in 7th cent. A.D.), there is a significant passage showing the chinese origin of Mahā Nila Saraswati or Tārā.

The word chola denotes a lake in the Mongol region while the western side of the Meru froms a part of China. From China through the middle Asian Caravan route to udyan or Sawāt (Swat) and Kashmir, from China, and Tibet through the Shipki pass to Jālandhar and through Nepalese passes to Nalandā.

In China and Japan the worship of the female principle or Śakti, associated with Indian Tantrism did not gain ground. The only feminine deity which has won universal allegiance and worship is 'Kyan-yin' in china and 'Kwan-Anon in Japan, who is regarded not as the consort of Avalokiteśwara but as the manifestation of the deity himself. Similarly even Tārā, Prajnā-Pārmitā, Chundā, and Saraswati remain in their esoteric aspects in China and Japan and are found more often in mystic Mandalas than as icons of worship as in the rest of India and Asia. Mongolian civilization has exaggerated the male principle.

As tantrism spread from India far and wide in the Asian continent, both the charming and fierce aspects of the divinity, male and female, have been embodied in worship and art from Mongolia to Java and from Bulkh to Japan. Tārā or Parna Sābari exhibit a magnificent beauty and feeling import, contrasted with those implicit in the more serene and pleasant types of beauty. Bhrikuti Tārā, Parnasābari, Marichi, Kurukullā are among the female deities symbolise the destructive aspects of the cosmic process.

The Kurukullā of Nepal, sometines called red Tārā, wears a crown of skulls and a garland of heads is a terific deity.

TĀRĀ

India

1. Tārā, Sita Tārā, Syāma Tārā, Ugra Tārā Bhrikuṭi, Ekajatā, Chinā-krama Tārā—Mahā Neela Saraswati.

Foreign lands

1. Tārā in Pagan—Burma.
2. Sgrol-ma or Savioress in Tibet.
3. Dara-eke-(or the Mother (Tārā) in Mongoliā
4. China-Tārā in Chinā.
5. Ro-Tārā-mi-hi in Japan.
6. Tārā in South East Asia.

CHAPTER IV

Rituals of Tārā Cult

The goddess Tārā, is of great importance in Tibetan religion. Tārā is the superhuman being in Tibet who might be called divine without further qualification. She is prayed to by millions; her help in all adversity is divine. Tārā is such a being who is either a Buddha, who is free from the endless chain of finite existences, or a Bodhisattva, who is perfect in every way. She is "almost a Buddha," yet chooses to relate to the world out of compassion. Such a being is Tārā, the great Goddess.

With Tārā, the fear that she would pass beyond this world did not seem to exist. It does not help much to search for "causes" to explain this trust in Tārā and her eternity. The help provided by Tārā is real. She is real and she is divine. Tārā, had always been, and still is the almighty support of her devotees who address her. In fact, she is mightier than Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The author convinces us that "Tārā in all her forms transcended any monopoly", and we hear that in a hymn she is addressed as, a mother who gives birth to all the Buddhas of all the times.

Many of the Indian iconographic lineages did take hold in Tibet, however, though there are iconographic fads and styles in that country as well as everywhere else in the world, and many of these lineages seem simply to be out of fashion at the moment and have been replaced by others. Very few artists nowadays, for example, depict the Twenty-one Tārās according to the canonical school of Suryagupta, but rather they follow the school attributed to Nāgārjuna, which is claimed, again, to have been transmitted by Atisa; and many artists follow a Nyingma or "ancient" tradition embodied in the "hidden text."

The worship of the goddess Tārā is one of the most widespread of Tibetan cults, undifferentiated by sect, education, class, or position: from the highest to the lowest. The Tibetans find with this goddess a personal and enduring relationship unmatched by any other single deity. Tārā's rituals differ from those of the "high patron deities" of the monastic cult in that they eschew much of the deeper—symbolism, and yet they conform to the basic patterns of all Tibetan ritual. Their straightforward avoidance of the textual complexities of the highest Tantras, is an advantage.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of these rituals is the true devotion with which the Tibetans approach the goddess. She guards and protects her people, they say, from the cradle to beyond the grave, and her devotees cry out to her in their distress and share with her their joys. This fundamental attitude of worship, however, is inevitably channeled through a ritual process of "offerings, praises, and prayer" and is directed to the goddess by the ceremonial forms of the monastic community.

LEGENDARY BEGINNINGS OF TĀRĀ

The universal veneration for the goddess was the result of a gradual process which began with the charismatic devotion of Atisa. It became a potent religious force by the fourteenth century, and culminated in the early seventeenth century with the great Tārānātha, from whose time the cult as we know has emerged. And this goddess, though everyone knows that her cult was imported from India, is related by myth to the very beginning of things in Tibet.

One of the early pre-Buddhist myths relating the origins of the Tibetan people holds that "a devil and an ogress held sway, and the country was called Land of the Two Divine Ogres. As a result, redfaced flesh-eating creatures were born." These demonic offspring were gradually given the crafts of culture by successive generations of culture-hero kings, and they became the civilized Tibetans Other versions of the myth say that the Tibetans were originally the simian descendants of a union between a rock ogress and a monkey. This latter account was eventually adopted as the official Buddhist version, and the monkey became identified first as a disciple and then as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. But, surprisingly enough, the fierce ogress—"lustful and lascivious, under the sway of desire"—became identified as incarnation of Tārā. As the Red Annals succinctly say, "Then, from the monkey Bodhisattva, an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, and the rock ogress, an incarnation of Tārā, there sprang the Tibetan people."

A further and historically more important tradition relates the actual introduction of Tārā's cult into Tibet to the Nepalese princess Tr'itsun, daughter of Amsuvarman and wife of the first great Tibetan king Srongtsen gampo (617-650). It is claimed in the various chronicles that this princess brought with her, among other images, a sandalwood statue of Tārā, which was placed in the Temple, constructed at the princess's order. There is some doubt as to the final disposition of this image. The great lāmā and geographer Jamyang ch'entse wangpo (1820-1892) gave an account of the temple and described a miraculous image of the goddess which was named "Lady who accepts the Ceremonial Scarf"; but in the 17th century the fifth Dalai Lama had already reported, in his guidebook to the temples of Lhasa, that the original Sandalwood image was no longer there.

Whatever doubts there may be about the whole tradition of Srongtsen gampo's marriages, there is nothing chronologically improbable in the original contention that such an image of Tārā was brought from Nepal, or that at least some knowledge of the goddess was carried to Tibet about this time. Even though the precise date of origin of Tārā-cult in India is still very much a vexed question. The earliest epigraphical document relating to her worship is a Javanese inscription of 778, "A.D. and it is difficult to place with assurance any text devoted to her much earlier than the early eighth century, which is too late by far to verify the Tibetan tradition. But there does exist one reference to the goddess prior to these dates, found not in any Buddhist manual of worship but, perhaps even more valuable. It is a pun provided by the illustrious Sanskrit author Subandhu in his prose-romance Vāsavadattā, a source not previously adduced, in any discussion of the problem. In this long prose work we find the following play on words: bhiksuki 'va tārānurāgaraktām-baradhārini bhagavati samdhyā samadṛsyata "The Lady Twilight was seen, devoted to the stars and clad in red sky, as a Buddhist nun, devoted to Tārā and clad in red garments."

If we accept that Subandhu was making a pun on the name of Buddhist goddess before what was a primarily Hindu audience in his courtly circle—and playing with the name as he played with those of the Brahmanic legends—it seems reasonable to suppose that this goddess was fairly well known by his time, otherwise the pun would be without effect. And even if we concede that he might have been showing off an esoteric knowledge of Buddhism, at least he himself was acquainted with some sort of cult of Tārā, a goddess whose popular devotion extended beyond the bounds of minor legend. Though Subandhu's exact date is by no means a closed question, we would probably place him about the middle of the seventh century, that is, just about the time that Tr'itsun, who is said to have carried Tārā's image into Tibet.

To this we may add as one further consideration the testimony of the great Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang, who traveled in India between 633 and 645 A.D., and who reports, the existence of two different images of a to-lo Bodhisattva, sex unspecified. One of these images, located about twenty miles west of Nalanda, accompanied Avalokiteśvara to form a triad with a central Buddha image. The other image, in its own temple nearer to Nalanda, he reports as being a "popular object of worship." There is every reason to believe that this to-lo is our goddess Tārā, and his remarking upon its popularity reinforces the probable validity of the Tibetan tradition.

All the traditious are unanimous in asserting that the Chinese wife was an incarnation of Green Tārā (or just Tārā, without qualification) and that the Nepalese wife was an incarnation of the goddess Bhrkuti, the "Lady with Frowing Brows." Thus, by the time of the earliest chronicles, we can see taking place an iconographization of the king and his wives, considering them a historical embodiment of the canonical triad of Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, and Bhṛkuti. This iconographic arrangement of the Bodhisattva with his two female companions is found as early as the Manjursri-mulakalpa. It is found in the Mahāvairocana-sutra and is placed by the Japanese Shingon sect in their great Garbhakosa—"embryo receptacle" or "womb"—mandala; there are many invocations of Avalokiteśvara in this form in the canonical anthologies.

There was possibly an image of Tārā in Tibet in the mid-seventh century. It is not until the second half of the eighth century that we can say for certain that at least some texts on Tārā had been translated into Tibetan. It is preserved in the Tenjur, a catalogue from the reign of King Tr'isong detsen (ruled 755-797) of "translations of scriptures and commentaries in the palace of Denkar, in the Tot'ang." This catalogue and its authors have been discussed by M Lalou, who sees no reason to doubt the date attributed to it. This list of translations includes only three works on Tārā: the Spell called "Mother of Avalokiteśvara," the 108 Names of the Goddess Tārā, and Candragomin's Praises of the Noble Tārā 'Who saves from All Great Terrors.

It is thus perhaps justly recorded that it was the great Atisa the "venerable master", Dipamkarasrijnāna, arriving at Ngari in 1042 A D. who brought the cult of Tārā to Tibet, despite the prior existence there of texts and images. "From the time he was a child," writes Sumpa k'enpo, "he was preserved by Tārā, the patron deity of his former lives." Atisa's life was filled with visions of the goddess; when he was young. She induced him to leave behind thoughts of royal power and seek a teacher in another country. It was the goddess who persuaded him to go to Tibet, in spite of his advanced age: "And when Atisa asked Tārā, she prophesied: 'If you go, your life will be shortened; but you will advance the teachings and benefit many beings, and chief among them a specific devotee.' And so he agreed." The "certain devotee" was Atisa's chief disciple, Jewe jungne, the Teacher from the Clan of Drom. The temple he built for the goddess Tārā still exists in Nyet'ang.

It must have been Atisa's personal devotion to the goddess—an enthusiasm that seems to have been caught by almost everyone he met—which more than anything else provided the impetus for her cult in Tibet, for he himself did not devote an inordinate amount of effort to the composition of texts dealing with her. Out of his total of 117 works, only four are devoted spectfically to Tārā. On these four, however, was buit almost the entire structure of her Tibetan cult, and they include one of the most popular of her hymns. It is inserted somewhere in almost each and every one of her rituals. Atisa wrote an evocation of White Tārā, based on the tradition of Vāgisvarakirti, and two evocations of Green Tārā.

The second half of the eleventh century did see an efflorescence of interest in Tārā, much of it due to the direct personal influence of the "venerable master." Darmadra, the

Translator of Nyen. He brought back from India traditions concerning what was to become the single most important canonical text of the Tārā cult, the Homages to the Twenty-one Tārās. It is not clear whether he himself translated this text into Tibetan, since the Kajur catalogue gives no translator, but in Dragpa jets'en's commentary on the text, published a hundred years later, Darmadra is given credit for the translation. Meanwhile, Rinch'endra, the Translator of Bari (born 1040), was translating texts on Tārā; he had met Atisa when he was only fifteen, and he too seems to have fallen under the spell of the master's devotion. He took over the seat of Sacha after the death of its founder K'on Konch'og jepo in 1102, he brought with him an image of the goddess. There was thus a flourishing tradition of Tārā at Sacha Monastery by the time Dragpa jets'en (1947-1216) became abbot in 1172, and he himself was the author of no fewer than thirteen works on the cult of the goddess. About the same time, in the late twelfth century, Ch'ochi zangpo helped translate another central text of the cult, the Tantra Which is the Source for All the functions of Tārā, Mother of All the Tathāgatas. A century and a half later, when the Red Annals were written, Tārā had become indisputably the mother of the Tibetan people.

THE CULT OF TĀRĀ

In the morning assembly, among the long series of rituals evoking the patron deities, every Kaju monastery inserts a short Four Mandala Offering. a hidden text of the goddess which had been revealed in contemplation K'amgargon supported a Tārā temple, where there was performed throughout the day the long Four Mandala Offering. But the goddess has no great monastic rituals or dances; her special rituals of protection and life are enacted in the monastery or the house of a devotee only upon the request of an individual, monk or lay, who endows their performance as a thanks offering.

To her devotees, however, Tārā is an abiding deity. Her constant availability perhaps best symbolized by the daily repetition of her ritual rather than by any great ceremony taking place only once a year. Seldom seen a personal altar, monk or lay, without her picture, prominently displayed somewhere, though it may be surrounded by a host of representations of other deities. She is a patron deity in a second sense of the word, a personal deity rather than a monastic patron. A mother to whom her devotees can take their sorrows and on whom they can rely for help. She might appear before one in a dream or bestow other tangible signs of her favour. Many stories are told of her miraculous and spontaneous intervention in the lives of those who follow her. The popular cult of the goddess is one of trust and reverence, of self-confident reliance upon the saving capacity of the divine and upon the human capacity to set in motion the divine mechanism of protection.

THE POPULAR DRAMA

This cult is promulgated and its premises are sustained not only by an informal folktale tradition but also by a more formalized tradition of native drama. The wandering troupes of actors perform indigenous tales of Tārā's patronage. Indeed, one of the most popular of these masked folk dramas in central Tibet is the Story of Nangsa obum. It is an account of the trials and tribulations of one of Tārā's best-known devotees. This type of "opera" is known as ach'e lhamo, so named after the goddesses, who are almost invariably represented therein and who must often act as deus ex machina when the plot becomes so complicated that there is no other way to resolve it. The drama is performed in the open air before enthusiastic and often vocal audiences, sung in a strangely impressive warbling chant and enlivened by ad-lib buffoonery and dance. The major part of the story is recited by a narrator at almost unintelligible speed, with each character coming forward to sing his set speeches in a tableau, which breaks up and reforms in a new pattern to the rhythmic clash of drums and cymbals. The actual performance may take several days, depending upon the elaborations of the troupe. Following is a translation of the didactic prologue and the account of Tārā's intercession in the heroine's miraculous conception and birth.[1]

Narrator :

Skilled in means, compassionate, born in the house of Sākya,
unconquerable conqueror of Māra,
his body shining like a pile of gold:
homage to the king of the Śākyas:

In the highest dwelling of Potala,
born from the green syllable TĀM,
saving beings with the light of the syllable TĀM
homage to mother Tārā:

In the language of the gods, the serpents, and the sprits,
the languages of celestials and men,
the languages of all beings, however many there may be:
in the languages of all we will teach the Law:

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[1] Stephen Beyer—The Cult of Tārā.

THE POPULAR RITUAL

When the hills were covered with flowers and weather was good, each village—as many as two hundred tents—would camp in a valley among the flowers and worship Tārā, thanking her for past favors and praying for future kindness. Each family sets up its own tent, forming a circle around the large tent in the middle. The main tent, white with blue decorations, was for the performance of the ritual, and the smaller tents were for cooking food, for playing knucklebones and Mah-Jongg, and for reading stories. There was a space for dancing the interminable lines and circles of the K'am dances and, outside. An area where the men could race their horses and shoot at targets from horseback. Inside the main tent was a circular table before the altar where the women and children piled up the flowers they had brought from the hills. for the first two days the villagers worshipped Avalokiteśvara, and then, for three to six days, they performed the ritual of the Four Mandala Offering to goddess Tārā.

There would be only a half-dozen monks performing this ritual. The monks unattached to a monastery, who lived permanently in the village; the rest of the tent was filled with lay people. Every day the same ritual was performed, lasting from about eight to ten o'clock in the morning, for the people could not eat meat or drink sharp liquor and sweet still beer until the performance had been completed. All the children sang and shoute together, and when each mandala offered up there was a rain of flowers. Everyone threw in the air what he had gathered from the hillsides. There were no monastic strictures on this holiday; when the ritual reached a part that everyone knew, such as the Homages to the Twenty-one Tārās, all the people repeated it together. Then, after lunch, came the games, the races, the children wrestling and playing tug-of-war, the drinking of large quantities of beer, and the calm and gossip of the old people sitting by the tents with their prayer wheels.

In this ritual devotees express their live for and their personal relations with the goddess Tārā in the offerings, praises, and prayers with which they seek to "arouse heart." They have complete confidence in the effectiveness of the ritual, fostered by their reliance upon the basic paradox of Tārā's divine nature: for she is kind and loving, ready to help them in any affliction. The monks who perform her ritual have imbibed her power, have completed all the recitations of her ritual service and are empowered not only to arouse her heart but also to employ her, to direct her divine energy by the impersonal recitation of her mantra.

The mythological renewals of Tārā's vows, her creation from initiatory light, symbolize to the Tibetans the source of her divine power, her contact with the ultimate potency of enlightenment, her literal "touching" of omnipotent Emptiness. All their deities are centers of this power, which is impelled into the primordial vows, which is fed by the deities' own meditation, and which is given its final form and direction (in re-creation of its primal genesis) by a ritual. It is, ultimately this cosmic power that is symbolized by the multitudious arms and weapons and by the sexual embraces of the highest deities; and it is this power that the practitioner forms "from the realm of Emptiness" by the Process of Generation.

Although we note in the myths of her origin how Tārā shares in the basic potency of the divine, how little true personality she has when compared with Hindu or Greek deities, here too the attitude of worship strives to break through the wall of inhuman power, of "otherness," which surrounds her. The Four Mandalas are a ritual of offering rather than of evocation: here there is no self-generation, no manipūlation of her power through the person of the practitioner. There is no contemplation of the mantra in the practitioner's own heart during self-generation, but rather the effectuation of the mantra in the deity's heart generated "in front": The nexus of power which is the deity is given iconographic form by the ritual Process of Generation and vividly visualized before the practitioner, that the goddess may be approached, her power tapped through her mantra, and the "stream of her heart aroused" with offerings, praises, and prayers.[1]

The rituals of offering are performed, for the most part, to thank the deity as a power beyond the practitioner for favors received, or to pray for future kindness. In the case of Tārā, one may prefer the simile of a mother granting favours to a son who had pleased her.

An early reference of this process is found in the Guhyasamāja Tantra where it is called the "four limbs of approach and evocation." Later commentators applied this terminology especially to the older Tantras, and to the rituals of the Guhyasamāja cycle in particular. Occasionally disagreeing on particulars of correlation; but with some alternation from the idiosyncrasy of these rituals. It is often used to schematize the Process of Generation wherever it is found, and it is applied to the evocations of goddess Tārā.

THE FOUR MANDALA OFFERING TO TĀRĀ

All these elements—the visualizations, the mantras and the hand gestures, the offerings, praises, and prayers—are the building blocks from which a ritual is constructed. A Tibetan ritual is built up on a standard pattern, a set dramatic form; elements may be left out or expanded upon, but the basic structure remains the same.

Thus the mandala, the offering of the universe, is the basic motif around which the Four Mandala Offering is built, a thematic center that unifies the diverse elements of the ritual. This ritual is one of the most popular expressions of devotion to Tārā and the most constant form of her worship. It is a ritual of offering rather than of evocation: here the goddess is generated only in front of the assembled practitioners, that she may be approached and the "stream of her heart aroused" with offerings, praises, and prayer. Yet even here the "paradox of power" functions in the recitation of the mantra, that she may not only be aroused with hymns but also requested to confer her boons. Her very presence before the assembly is a magical image for the divine power, which may be controlled by the siddha yogin; but this power is there to be worshipped, to be requested for protection, and the ritual often includes some of the most moving poetry of Buddhist devotion. The intention is to worship and not to control; but control is in the very nature of the ritual act.

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[1] Slephen.Beyer-Tle cult of Tārā p. 369.

Before performing this ritual, if possible, the practitioners should be clean and pure themselves and cleanse the place and the equipment. If they are unable to do so, the ritual should at least be performed in the morning before any of them has eaten meat or drunk beer. It is most meritorious if this ritual is performed by seven or eight pure monks; if eight monks are unavilable, it is also very potent if performed by four monks. If even those are unavailable, the holy ones of the past have said that it may be performed even by one monk. In general, act of virtue has greater benefit if performed by those who keep all the vows of the monastic discipline. Even if a monk keeps only the most important of these rules—the ten vows of a novice—the benefit of his performance is still greater than that of others. But here especially for the Four Maneala ritual it is not sufficient just to have kept the vows of the monastic discipline, but the practitioners must also have gone through all the necessary initiations and have completed the prior ritual service of the deity.

If this ritual is being perfored for the purpose of accumulating merit, says our author after his introductory salutation to the deity, it should be performed especially at the time of the full moon, the new moon, the eighth day, and so on. If it is for cleansing one's obscurations or for clearing away hindrances, it should be performed "as appropriate to the occasion"—that is, after one has committed a sin. And if it is performed as a special provision for gaining a particular desire, it should then be performed on the day immediately preceding the event, or before embarking upon the enterprise. To this Yeshe jets'en adds that the ritual is even more meritorious if performed on one of the great yearly festivals "when wonders were done by the great compassionate Teacher"—on Buddha's birthday, on the anniversaries of his enlightenment, his first preaching, his decent from the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods, and so on—or on the holiday that celebrate the birth of the holy ones of the past.

Arrange four mandalas with seven "piles" on each and draw about each of the four a double fence, a round circle of fragrant flowers. Surround each of them also with the five offerings of butter lamps, food incense, water, and perfume. Set out flowers in a good vessel, to be scattered at the time of praying, and all the other utensils that will be necessary later on the offering tormas, the bathing water, and so on.

The place, too, should be made beautiful by an array of decorations on the ceiling and walls: umbrellas or canopies, banners adorned with yak tails, pendants, curtains, and so on, whatever is available. If that much is unavailable, it is sufficient to use just some of the really important things, the mandalas and so on. In general, the more offerings there are the better it is; but otherwise it is all right if they are created by profound contemplation.

Later on in the text, when the ritual reaches the torma offering, he adds that four "round white tormas"—also called "gift tormas" should be set out in separate vessels in front of the larger offering tormas mentioned above These gift tormas are those presented to the four classes of "guests" at the end of the ritual. Thus, by referring to plate 2, we can see what he calls the "three rows of tormas, arranged according to size": on the top row are the four offering tormas for the goddess, on the next row the subsidiary food tormas, and on the lowest row (nearly hidden) by the offering bowls which represent the two waters.

The day before the actual performance of the ritual is spent in the preparation of the altar—the "arraying of ornaments"—and the hanging of painted scrolls on the walls, the filling of butter lamps, the picking of flowers, and the molding of the tormas. These are made from zen—barley flour mixed with water, with perhaps some butter added to give body—and their adornments are made of colored butter, kept cool in a pan of water and shaped with the fingers into the form of flowers, often of the most astonishing delicacy.

As the sponsors of the ritual, one had to pay for all the material necessary for these preparations: the butter for the lamps, the flour for the tormas, the grain for filling the offering bowls, and so on. In addition, the sponsor buys the tea that is served throughout the ritual and, since on this occasion the performance lasted all day, lunch for the monastery as well. Finally, each monk gets paid individually for his professional services.

The Four Mandalas are the unifying theme in this rather complex ritual of offering: though the goddess is generated only once.

AROUSING HER HEART WITH PRAYERS

Finally, then, the monks "arouse the stream of her heart with prayer, "praying for their desires and requesting the magical attainments. They fill their hands with the flowers before them and join their palms, and "with a devoted and one-pointed mind" they repeat the prayer made before to the Three Jewels in general, except that this time, after the first paragraph (which ends ". . . I pray you think of all of us!"), they insert the following lines.

> Holy blessed noble Tārā. with the hosts of fathers, mothers, sons, neighbours, and retinue:
> I pray you think of all of us!

And as before flowers are scattered at each verse, and a benediction may be recited at the end for the fulfillment of any special prayer or earnest wish.

This concludes the first of the three "rituals of offering and prayer to the holy blessed Lady," and the monks now go back to the beginning and repeat the entire ritual again. Here, however, for the third mandala (the second offered to Tārā in particular) the homage at the beginning of the offerings is changed to the recitation (or singing) of the verses. The remainder of the second ritual for Tārā is exactly the same as the first, repeating everything over again, save only that here the basic mantra is recited 300 times and with its appendix 150 times; following the same numerical sequence, the Homages are here read three times and the benefit verses once.

The fourth mandala (the third "ritual of offering and prayer to Tārā") again goes back to the beginning. In this third ritual for Tārā her basic mantra is recited 700 times and with its appendix 350 times; the Homages are read seven times and the benefit verses once.

GIVING THE TORMAS

After all four mandalas have been offered, the ritual moves into its concluding acts, which begin with filling in the offerings; the first of these, again, is the presentation of the tormas to the four classes of guests. The most standard list of these consists of (1) the main deity, who represents as well all the gurus, high patron deities, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and so on; (2) the protectors of the Law in general (3) the "lords of the soil," the local spirits who rule over a particular spot—the lands of a village, a mountain pass, or the ford of a river—and whose influence for good or evil can have a profound effect upon the success of the Law in any locality; and (4) the sentient beings in all the six destinies. This list can, of course, vary sometimes, for example, the latter two classes may be grouped together and offered a single "worldling torma". Very often special "prayer tormas" are offered to the protectors; another torma may be offered to the hindering demons a bribe not to disturb the ritual, and so on. Each of these tormas has its own distinctive shape and decoration; a prospective head—monk must know how to make perhaps fifty different types. Thus the presentation of these tormas is by no means a minor part of the ritual, as evidenced by the care given to their decoration and the artistry lavished upon their production. Their offering constitutes as much a ritual function as does the effectuation of the mantra in Tārā's heart and requires as much personal and contemplative preparation.

We have seen that on the altar are three types of torma; here the offering tormas and the food tormas do not play an active part in the ritual, representing simply the general offerings that are made throughout, "effigies" as it were for the contemplative creation of the "divine substances" of the ritual. It is, rather, the gift tormas that are here presented to the guests and, in the case of the last three, actually thrown out the door of the assembly hall to their waiting recipients. The gift torma for Tārā remains on the altar, for she is present there before the assembly.

TO THE GODDESS TĀRĀ

In presenting the first of these tormas to the goddess, the offering is cleansed by the recitation of the AMṚṬA mantra and purified into Emptiness by the recitation of the SVABHĀVA mantra. The monks recite the verse.

These visualized tormas are then empowered by reciting OM AH HUM three times, each recitation accompanied by rolling the fingers inward and bringing the hands around to form the special empowering flying-bird gesture, so named after its spreading, winglike shape. Thus pure and empowered, the tormas are "given to the blessed noble Lady, the gathering into one of the Three Jewels, and to her retinue," by reciting seven times the following mantra:

> "Homage to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and
> to their indestructible doctrine ! O Blessed One !
> great being seen by all the Buddas ! Do not
> hesitate ! do not hesitate ! Take ! take this torma !
> HUM HUM ! JA JA ! Moving about everywhere SVĀHĀ !"

As the monks offer this torma to the goddess, they "visualize that she accepts it": they see her draw up its essence with her narrow tongue, in the shape of a hollow and one-pointed vajra. In addition, they make offerings to her with the mantra series and the gestures of the outer offerings, and they praise her with Atisa's verse "Gods and demigods bow their crowns . . ." To complete the triad of offerings, praises, and prayers, they pray to her by reciting or singing the verses:

> I pray you, holy noble Tārā, grant us all the magical attainments, ordinary and most excellent. I pray you be our refuge from all harm, the eight and the sixteen great terrors. I pray you save us from the great ocean of suffering in this world. I pray you pacify all suffering.

Here, too, if the practioner has any special purpose in mind, he may take advantage of these offerings and praises to "pray fiercely for its accomplishment."

As part of a recurring Buddhist iconographic process, each of these eight terrors was assigned its own Tārā, and the depiction of the eight Tārās became a popular theme for Indian artists; a tradition continued in Tibet where the painters relished the chance to fill their canvases with delightful drawings of elephants, lions, and threatened caravans. On one Indian image of this goddess, for example, originally from Ratnagiri in Orissa, are depicted miniature scenes of the eight great terrors, in which the person in danger in each instance prays to a miniature replica of the goddess shown above. The eight great terrors depicted in the relief are terror of drowning, of thieves, of lions, of snakes, of fire, of spirits, of captivity, and of elephants. Another representation of the eight terrors is shown in Tucci's Tibetan Painted Scrolls: six figures below, and two more on a level with the shoulders of the goodess, signify her forms invoked by devotees to ward off the terrors. The goddess, always with the same gesture, touches with her right hand the head of the man who has run to her for aid. Behind her are the symbols of the terrors: the elephant, the lion, the demon, in the lively folk style common to this theme.

THE PROTECTIVE MANTRA OF TĀRĀ

The surest protection from these inevitable and physical dangers to life—fire and water, wild beasts, and the malignancy of man—is the love and graciousness of Tārā. Her power, was soon expanded to the spiritual counterparts of these terrors. We find her guarding her followers from the eight and the sixteen great terrors, the latter including the former and adding doubt, lust, avarice, envy, false views, hatred, delusion, and pride. The simplest cry of her name is, sufficient to gain her protection. But in Tibet the recitation of her mantra is the universal means of gaining safety amidst the feares of life. "If one knows enough to recite her mantra," says Gedundrub, "then, it is said, though one's head be cut off one will live, though one's flesh be hacked to pieces, one will live: this is a profound counsel."

It does not matter whether one is a householder or has left the household life, "Doje ch'opa once said in a speech to his Chinese disciples. "Everyone should practice the recitation of the Mantra of Green Tārā in order to remove all inner and outer hindrances and so become as a pure porcelain vessel. Thus the recitation has consequ ences that are most great, an evocation that is most quick and effects that are most keen; just hearing its sound has an inconceivable effect that saves from suffering . . . . Whatever one wants to have, whatever unpleasant thing one wants to be without, she responds to it like an echo. This deity loves and protects the practitioner as if she were the moon accompanying him, never a step away.

There is a wide variety of mantras of Tārā depending upon the particular appendix and its function, but only the short mantra (OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SVAHA) is actually in common use outside the assembly hall. The long mantra (OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE MAMA AYUH-PUNYA-JNANA-PUSTIM-KURU SVĀHA)—which adds the appendix most closely associated with White Tārā—is not very popular among the laity, but they often recite the short one, and indeed, sing it occasionally to a very sweet, slow, rather mournful tune.

THE PROTECTIVE PRAISES

Even more than the mantra, many Tibetans consider the chanting of the Tibetan translation of the Homages to the Twenty-one Tārās to be especially meritorious and effective. Thus following a common historical pattern of considering a praise in its entirety to a a form of mantra. In the same modern Chinese manual on the Twenty-one Tārās which contains the sermon quoted above, Sun Ching-feng records the words of No-na Hutukhtu, a lama who traveled as far as Hong Kong in the late 1930s . . . It is most certainly fortunate if one is able to recite this entire mantra, these Homages to the Twenty-one Tārās. If not, then just reciting the mantra of Green Tārā has special efficacy. Moreover, the pains of women are particularly numerous; but if they recite the mantra with a devoted mind, it has an especially wondorous effect."

The first part begings with the practitioner seated in a comfortable position. He has set out the offerings and the tormas, and he has gone through the preliminaries of cleansing and empowering them, as we have seen before. We may note here that the present ritual gives no details on the presentation of these offerings, the praising of the goddess, and so on. It presumes that the practitioner will be able to fill in the major outline at the proper places; this terseness hides no secrets, but simply presumes s practitioner has attended other rituals.

The practitioner then begins with his accumulation of the stock of merit before the field of hosts. He instantaneously visulizes himself as Tārā. with a TAM in his/her heart above a lotus and a moon. Varicolored lights radiate forth from that seed and invite into the sky before him, his guru and Tārā, surrounded by a retinue of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Once again the light from his heart radiates forth, bearing a host of offerings, and these he presents with the gestures and mantras OM VAJRA-PUSPE HUM and so on. He then confesses his sins, rejoices in the virtues of other, dedicates his own merit, goes for refuge, awakens the thought of enlightenment, and offers up his own body. Thus he may perform the seven parts of the sevenfold office separately, or he may recite the short version ("I go for refuge to the Three Jewels . . ."), whichever he prefers. Then he contemplates the Four Immeasurables.

Having thus accumulated his stock of merit, he accumulates his stock of knowledge by reciting the ŚUNYATĀ mantra and contemplating Emptiness. By the strength of remembering his thought of enlightenment he thinks: "It should arise from Emptiness in a bodily form, for the sake of sentient beings." So from the realm of Emptiness a PAM, and from that a lotus; from A there is the orb of a moon, above which is a green TAM: and that syllable transforms into a lotus flower marked with TAM, from which light rediates forth and makes offerings to the Noble Ones. When it has served the aims of sentient beings—when it has purified the entire world—the light is gathered back within the syllable; at that very instant, as it dissolves within the TAM, he visulizes himself as Tārā, her body colored green, her right hand in the refuge gesture which grants fearlessness, holding in her left hand a lotus flower whose petals touch her ear, her hair bound up and swirling down to the right, wearing silken garments, adorned with many jewled ornaments, in the prime of youth and smiling.

Next the practitioner empowers her limbs; he visualizes upon his/her eyes a white OM TĀRE SVĀHĀ, upon her ears a blue OM TUT-TĀRE SVĀHĀ, on her nose a yellow OM TURE SVAHA, on her tongue a red OM TU SVĀHĀ, on her heart a blue OM RE SVAHA, and on the top of her head a green OM TĀRANI SVAHA, all of them enthroned upon a moon.

RITUALS OF TĀRĀ FOR THE BASIC MAGIC

Ritual type 4a: Direct application.—Aside from the various applications of basic magical principles, it is above all as a goddes of protection that Tārā functions, and it is toward that end that most of the magical rituals employ her power. "Once one has recited her basic mantra 1,000,000 times," says no less an authority than Atisa himself, "the yogin who dwells in the deep contemplation of Tārā (i. e., who 'holds her ego') can vary his ritual of recitation, visualizing the name of the person for whom the ritual is performed placed in the middle of the mantra and reciting it as long as he wishes; then he sees that light arises from the seed syllable in his heart and pervades the entire body of that person, and he visualizes that his body is consoled thereby and freed from all harm. This is a protection of pacifying."

Atisa goes on to explain a similar "protection of averting":

> The yogin possessed of the above ritual visualizes on his own heart a green TAM, quivering with a garland of light; blazing hosts of light arise therefrom, and they enter into the heart of the one to be summoned, his body naked, his hair unbound, shivering and without refuge; and the practitioner visualizes that the light purifies that person, subdues him, confuses him, and binds him. And whenever he is tired of this deep contemplation, he should visualize these syllables about the seed and recite them as the mantra:
>
> NAMO RATNATRAYAYA NAMO ARY AVALOKITESVA-
> RAYA BODHISATTVAYA MAHASATTVAYA MAHAKA-
> RUNIKAYA : TADYATHA OM TARE TUTTRRE TURE SAR-
> VA-DUSTAN PRADUSTAN MAMA KRTE JAMBHAYA STAM-
> BHAYA MOHAYA BANDHAYA HUM HUM HUM PHAT
> PHAT PHAT : SARVA-DUSTA-STAMBHANI-TARE SVAHA :

'Homage to the Three Jewels: Homage to the Noble Avalokitesvara, Bodhisattva, great being, greatly compassionate: That is: OM TARE TUTTARE TURE all the sins and evils I have done: crush : confuse : HUM HUM : PHAT PHAT : Tārā who petrifies all sin SVAHA :"

Another interesting function of this sort—employing Tārā's power through the imposition of a visualization and the application of a mantra, without the intermediary of any device—was brought to Tibet from India as a corollary of her protective powers and is known as the "binding of thieves." An Indian text translated by Ratnaraksita gives the short ritual as follows: that there may be no thieves when the practitioner travels the road, it says, he takes with his right hand a fistful of earth from the ground seven paces in front of his doorstep. He then generates himself instantaneously as the Holy Lady, and in the proper manner he goes for refuge and awakens the thought of enlightenment. Then he generates the earth in his hand as Mount Meru—he dissolves it into Emptiness and recreates it from the syllable LAM, the seed of earto—and he generates his left hand as a great ocean, arisen from PAM. During this visualization he says: "I now summon before me all thieves who would do me harm:" And he recites the following mantra 108 times, uninterrupted by any human speech: OM TĀRE TUTTĀRE TURE ASMAN APAKARA-SARVA-GRA-BANDHA SVAHA: "OM TARE TUTTARE TURE bind all thieves who harm us SVAHA:" Then he visualizes that all the thieves who have been summoned before him are cast into the great ocean, and he transfers the earth from his right hand to his left, that Mount Meru may press down upon them. The earth is wrapped up and thrown away in a safe place, and when the practitioner travels, he goes singing the praises of Tārā.

The practitioner draws on the ground with his foot the shape of a bow and arrow, and he places his feet thereon so that he stands covering it. He visualizes that they become—once again, from Emptiness—an iron arrow that carries him without delay to the place where he wishes to go, and he receites this mantra 108 times: OM TARE TUTTARE TURE MAMA DHANA "my property" bind all thieves and robbers SVAHA: OM TARANI TARANI MAHĀTĀRANI "Saving, saving, great saving one" SVAHA: If he recites this, the text concludes, it is impossible that there will be any terror on the road.

He consecrates this by reciting Tārā's mantra and the YE DHARMA mantra. Then he places it inside a jeweled vessel, and for seven days he generates himself as Tārā, evokes her inside the vessel, and makes offerings to her; and he visualizes that Tārā melts and is dissolved into the syllable TAM in the center of the device. Then he folds it up and puts it inside a jeweled container, which a man may carry on his right, a woman on her left, or either may hang around the neck. The text adds that a green circle is mostly used for protection and a white one for increasing life, but that either function may be accomplished by using a white circle.

Then when the time comes that he must enter into battle, he visualizes himself as Tārā and recites the above mantra. One should have no doubt about its effectiveness, the text says, for it operates according to Tārā's vow.

Many such protections are used at the particularly dangerous periods of pregnancy and birth. The practitioner first hangs the following mantra around the neck of a flask:

> OM TARANI TARAYA: OM MOCANI MOCAYA: OM MOKSANI MOKSAYA: JIVAM VARADE SVAHA:
>
> "OM Save me, Savioress: OM Liberate me, liberated one: OM Free me, freed one: You grant the highest gift of life SVAHA:"

He then mixes together the "twenty-five substances of the flask" and pours these into the flask with scented water. He makes offerings and prayers before it and evokes the deity therein; all day he recites OM TARE SVAHA: and in the evening he recites the 10-syllable mantra as follows: OM TARE TUTTARE TURE such-and-such a woman MOKSAYA JIVAM SVAHA:

He continues until he has recited 100,000 times over the water in the flask; then, midnight has passed, he places the pregnant woman upon a seat of kusa grass, performs the preliminaries of clearing the place of hindering demons and so on, and finally, facing to the east, he washes and anoints her with the water. Similarly, he recites the mantra over some butter and smears this over her body and into her vagina. If he does this, the woman will give birth easily and without fear.

As soon as the child is born the practitioner places upon it one of Tārā's protections. This should be done, the text says, as soon as possible. Every day both mother and child are anointed with the water that was evoked in the flask, being washed, cleansed, and purified thereby. The practitioner makes offerings to Tārā with a Four Mandala ritual and prays to her for their safety.

THE DANGERS OF PROTECTIVE POWER

Thus Tārā's power of protection may be controlled and directed through ritual by a practitioner who is contemplatively prepared to handle it. But the very efficacy of this power makes it occasionally difficult to manipulate save by a real expert, and here we find additional precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the unwary.

Tārā's protective power mainifests itself also in the form of a deity named Bhimādevi, also called the "Blue She-wolf" and depicted as one, with its head turned toward its tail. This is an emanation of Tārā whose special function is the protection of those, who practice her rituals and the guarding of the books in which they are recorded.

SELF-GENERATION

The ritual proceeds immediately to the self-generation without pausing here for the standard preliminary of empowering the offerings, since these will be empowered individually at the time they are presented. Here the practitioners grasp the ego and vivid appearance of the goddess, gaining the power to direct her divine energy. The most important part of the ritual is not the generation of the deity herself, but rather the evocation and employment of her power. This single-minded concentration upon the main point of the ritual leads not only to abbreviation but also to the final departure of the knowledge being, after "ordinary ego" has been cast away through its descent. It is expected that the practitioners, their ritual service and long contemplative training, dwell already in the deep contemplation of Tārā and require only a symbolic ritual generation.

The Tārā swift and heroic, who destroys hindering demons and injuries, her body colored red, holding the red flask that subjugates.

The Tārā white as the autumn moon, who defeats diseases and evil spirits holding the white flask that pacifies.

The Tārā who increases life and enjoyment, colored yellow, holding the yellow flask that increases.

The Tārā victorious, who grants the highest life, colored yellow, holding the yellow flask of life.

The Tārā crying the sound of HUM, who subjugates and summons with the gesture of wisdom, her body colored red-yellow, holding the red flask that ravishes.

The Tārā victorious over the triple world, who tames ghosts, her body colored red-black, holding the blue flask that confounds ghosts and awakened corpses.

The Tārā defeating others, who averts the magic mantras of others, her body colored black, holding the black flask that averts magic mantras.

The Tārā who defeats the demons and enemies, her body colored red-black, holding the red flask that defeats the demons and enemies.

The Tārā whose gesture symbolizes the Three Jewels, who protects from all terrors, holding the white flask that defeats all terrors.

The Tārā who tames all du demons and obstructions, her body colored red, holding the red flask that defeats du demons.

The Tārā dispelling the suffering of poverty, who grants the magical attainments, her body colored red-yellow like refined gold, holding the yellow flask that dispels poverty.

The Tārā who grants all good fortune, her body the color of gold, holding the white flask of good fortune.

The Tārā who defeats hindering demons and obstacles, her body colored red and blazing like fire, holding the red flask that protects from obstacles.

The Tārā with frowning brows, who destroys hindering demons, her body colored black, holding the dark blue flask that pierces hindering demons, her brows slightly frowning.

The Tārā great and calm, who cleanses sins and obscurations, her body colored white, flask that cleanses sins and obscurations.

The Tārā victorious over the contentions of others, who increases one's intelligence, her body colored red, holding the red-yellow flask that increases wisdom.

The Tārā pacifying the demons and obscurations, who shakes the triple world, her body colored red-yellow, holding the yellow flask that subdues magic mantras.

The Tārā pacifying the poison of the lu serpents, who dispels it, her body colored white, holding the white flask that dispels poison and disease.

The Tārā who dispels bad dreams and suffering, her body colored white, holding the white flask that dispels suffering.

The Tārā who dispels all fevers, her body colored white, holding the white flask that dispels fevers.

The Tārā who fulfills all active functions, her body colored white and radiating varicolored lights, holding the green flask whence come all magical attainments..

All these have one face and two hands: in their right hands, upon the palm of their gift-bestowing gestures, they hold the flasks that accomplish their various active functions, and with their left hands they hold a lotus flower. They are seated with their right feet extended and their left drawn up, on thrones of lotus and moon, adorned with silks and all precious ornaments, radiating forth measureless light, and surrounded on all sides by countless hosts of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, high patron deities, dākinis, and protectors of the Law.

As a final word, our author says in the colophon to his ritual: "In general, just by bearing in mind the name of the holy Tārā one is preserved from all terrors and averts all obstacles; especially she is the supreme deity and single protector of those who follow the Great Vehicle, the hereditary deity of the Snowy Land of Tibet, the swiftest empowerment in these degenerate times. Thus if one strives in this, rather than in the trifling rituals of transferring the danger which are associated with the doctrines of the Bon, then will one easily accomplish hereafter the great aims of oneself and others."

THE VALUE OF LIFE

We have already noted that it was Vāgisvarakirti who conceived White Tārā in the specialized function of cheating death. Though she was thus linked to one particular function from the beginning, her activities were soon expanded to cover the entire range of pacifying, increasing, and subjugating, toward all of which ends her rituals may be used. But all commentators are agreed that it is primarily as a goddess of life that she is called upon; among the boons for which the Tibetans pray their deities, or the magical attainments they hope to gain from contemplation, perhaps none is more frequent, next to enlightenment itself, than length of life.

Human life, to the Tibetans, is not only precarious—threatened on all sides and easily terminated by their harsh environment or the malevolent actions of men or spirits—but also infinitely precious, for it is only in this human body that progress can be made towards the ultimate goal of Buddhahood. Thus the hard-won human condition, with its opportunity to hear the holy Law, is called the life of "quietude and benefit."

THE INITIATION INTO LIFE

The basic preliminary initiation of White Tārā—the "permission" to practise her rituals, the indispensable prerequisite to her ritual service, her evocation and employment—is sometimes referred to rather loosely as an "initiation into life', because it is held to include her specialized function of prolonging the recipients' lives through removing their "diseases, sins, obscurations, and untimely death" and empowering their body, speech, and mind. But an initiation into life, properly speaking, is rather a special case of this initiation: it adds the the performance by the Master of a magical operation of ritual the transference of power from "life substances" he has previously evoked. The power, the Master magically transmits to his disciples is the power of long life, and not the power of contemplation; and when a delegation of lay people approach a high lama to request his performance of this ritual—and the life of any high lama is a constant succession of such requests—they have in mind not so much his bestowing of authorization and capacity for their future practice as the exercise of his magical powers to prolong their lives.

THE RITUAL OF PERMISSION

The permission of white Tārā as given in the corpus of Kongtru rinpoch'e is preparatory authorization which, in the text's own words, "makes one a fit vessel for her practice." Thus this ritual is the necessary preliminary to the ritual service of the goddess; without the strengthening of this initiation, no ordinary human body could contain her power, no ordinary human body could contain her power, no ordinary human speech could recite her mantra, and no ordinary human mind could contemplate the Emptiness that is her essence. The recipients of this permission are not only authorized to enter upon the particular ritual service whose textual transmission they receive, but they are also now rendered capable of its performance through the magic of the Master. The structure of this transmission of contemplative power is the same as that for the transmission of the powvr of life: here the guru's magic is directed into the persons of his disciples, and his own visualization and recitation make his followers fit to acquire the deity's power on their own.

We should be placed in the rank of the holy Tārā, who pacifies the impediments to life which are the condition of all beings, as infinite as space, and who is ultimately the essence of deathless life and knowledge. It is to that end that you should awaken the thought of enlightenment, deeply desiring the profound permission of the supreme deity Cintācakra, and pay the most clear and continual attention to the Law as it is taught in the scriptures and Tantras.

Now the Tantras wherein the holy White Tārā is expounded are as follows: in the Tantra of Tārā the Yogini, Source for All Rituals it says:

> Set the person who is the object of the ritual
> in the middle of an eight-spoked wheel;
> on the eight spokes, eight syllables,
> surrounded by the lords of the city of her mantra.
> By a green wheel one is protected;
> one cheats death with a white one.

In the Tantra of the Four Sites of Pilgrimage, at the end of its explanation of the evocation of Green Tārā, it says: one should contemplate on the white wheel.

VIVID APPEARANCE

The author says: "Having thus finished thus finished generating himself as the deity by contemplating these four limbs, along with the offerings and praise, the practitioner must apply himself one-pointedly to vivid appearance. This is most basic part of the first stage, the Process of Generation; the simple recitation of the mantra is but a subsidiary. Now a beginner should make his visualization step by step; once he has achieved a little vivid appearance, all at once everything will become vivid. Thus at the beginning, we shall vividly visualize each separate part of her body." And he proceeds to give a list of the deity's bodily qualities, which the practitioner must concentrate on visualizing one at a time:

> The colour of her body is white as an autumn moon, as a crystal gem, radiating forth an unbearably bright five-coloured light for a long distance.

Her eyes and earlobes are long. and the whites and blacks of her eyes are sharply differentiated; she is beautiful with eyelashes like those of the finest cow, and with eyebrows slightly curved.

The sweet smell of lotuses diffuses from her nose and mouth; the line of her lips is pure and red.

Her forty teeth are a fine-textured garland; her tongue is fine and soft.

Her hair is black as bees or onyx, bound up at the top of her head, the rest falling to the right and left.

Her neck is round and has three folds.

Her fingers are like the filaments of a lotus thin and soft, wondrously beautiful.

Just by seeing her sensuous manner—one can't have enough of looking at it—she gives inexhaustible bliss.

With her smiling and passionate manner like a sixteen-year-old girl, her firm round breasts, the slimness of her waist, and her "secret lotus" curved high as the back of a tortoise on the broad fullness beneath, she ravishes away the steadiness of the triple world.

On her head are three eyes, including one on her forehead, and four more on the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet: In all, seven beautiful and smiling eyes of knowledge.

Her right hand is in the gift-bestowing gesture, stretched out above her knee; with her left hand by her heart, the ring finger and tnumb joined, the rest extended, she holds the stem of a white lotus, with leaves and sublime colour and smell, whose petals bloom at the level of her ear.

As an ornamented on her crown she wears human and divine gems, their light radiating far off, placed in a garland of open golden lotuses around her hair; her ear ornaments are jeweled earrings, round and bordered with gem; the throat ornaments upon her beautiful neck are a string of pearls reaching to her breast and a necklace circling to below her navel; she wears bracelets on her upper arms and on her wrists, the same shape but different in size; and her anklets encircle her feet.

All these are clusters of three jewels beautifully bound into a three-strand garland of gems, bedecked with many fine hanging strings of jewels; her golden girdle is a belt holding the settings of gems, and small silver bells tinkle at the end of its hanging nets and strings of jewels.

Her upper garment is white silk with golden threads; her lower garment is varicoloured silk, like a rainbow. Her sash (scarf) has the colour of sapphire, and her whole body, above and below, is tantalizingly adorned with many divine flowers, placed in rows both long and short.

She sits with her body straight upon a throne of lotus and moon, her two feet crossed in the diamond vajrāsana posture; behind her back is the full orb of the moon, radiating cool beams of light far off bright and strainless.

On her heads is the lord of the family; on the three places of her body are the three syllables; on her heart is the wish-granting wheel; her throne is a lotus and moon.

The divine mansion is of crystal; around the outside is the circle of protection.

"Thus he should vividly visualize," says the author, "concentrating in sequence from the inside to the outside; then, turning about, he should vividly visualize the circle of protection, the divine mansion, the throne, the parts of her body, and so on, from the outside to the inside. He should especially grasp one-pointedly any part or aspect that may become especially vivid, and thereby increase the vivid appearance in general. As he practices these general aspects, he should contemplate for a long time on the essencelessness of her appearance as like a reflection in a mirror, the undilutedness of her vividness as like a rainbow, and her pervasiveness as like a moon in water; thus he will at the very least make her vivid as a mental object, next best as if she were really present, and best of all even more vivid than that. And if this vivid appearance becomes firm—continuous—he will gain without impediment all the functions and magical attainments that have been spoken of."

VISUALIZING THE WHEEL

The recitation beging with the practitioner vividly visualizing himself as White Tārā; right in the middle of his heart he visualizes an eight-petaled white lotus, with the disk of a moon laid down flat upon it. Above this "throne" is an eight-spoked white wheel of the Law with one rim, in the center of which is a white TAM. When he performs the basic part of the recitation—the ten-syllable mantra—he should visualize on OM floating like a bird over the drop or point on top of the TAM, and a HA below it, all three within the center of the wheel, with the eight remaining syllables arrayed on the eight spokes. But if he is adding the appendix to the mantra, he should visualize the TAM in the center of the wheel surrounded by OM MAMA AYUH-PUNYA-JNANA-PUSTIM-KURU HA clock-wise from the front, with TA RE TU TTA RE SVAHA facing inward on the eight spokes beginning from the front. All these syllables, too, are like pearl beads, white and radiating their own light, unwavering firmly fixed in position. And he should visualize them with assurance, concentrating upon them one-pointedly, just as he did for the vivid appearance.

But here, also, White Tārā's specialized function of prolonging life is not ignored: the above method of "arising in the body of Innate Union" is general to all deities, and the author of our ritual service provides an alternative technique, which may also be practiced separately as a magical function, but here applied to "arising in the body of the deity." Thus, from the realm of Emptiness brought about through the Process of Perfection there appears in a single instant a white spherical pavilion, having eight ribs, one in each of the eight directions, and two more above and below, making ten in all. The sharp points of their tips rotate clockwise just fast enough so that they are blurred; and in the middle of its round center, upon a throne of lotus and moon, is the practitioner himself, instantaneously arisen as the holy Cintacakra, with all her ornaments, the lord of the family upon her head, and the wheel and its syllables in her heart.

If one consults the Tantra of Tārā, the Yogini, the author says, it would seem that little importance is attached to daily purity and so on; but, according to the long-established tradition of Atisa, it is best if the practitioner washes the dwelling, the utensils, and himself with bathing water over which has been recited the "conquering" mantra, he gives up meat and beer and so on while he is practicing the ritual service, and if in short he keeps himself in a condition of bodily purity. He should avoid garlic and onions, etc which pollute the strength of his speech.

Thus there are said to be three aspects of a torma: as an offering it is presented to the deity; as an evocation the deity is generated within it, and the power thereof may be transmitted to a recipient through physical contact; and as a substance of magical attainment it may be eaten by the participants at the end of a ritual, to absorb the empowerment it contains.

APPENDIX—A

॥ आर्य्यखदिरवाणी तारासाधनम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

पूर्व्ववच्छून्यतापर्य्यन्तं विभाव्य पद्मचन्द्रे ताँबीजपरिणतेन्दीवरं ताँबीजगर्भं, तत्परिनिष्पन्नां हरिताममोघसिद्धिमुकुटीं वरदोत्पलधारिदक्षिणवामकरां अशोककान्तामारीच्येकजटाव्यग्रदक्षिणवामदिग्भागां दिव्यकुमारीमलङ्कारवतीं ध्यात्वा ज्ञानसत्वेन सहैकीकृत्य ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा इति मन्त्रं जप्त्वा तन्मनसैव यथेष्टं विहरेत् ।

॥ महत्तरीतारासाधनम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

प्रथमं स्वहृदीन्दुमध्यस्थताँबीजविनिर्गतरश्मिभिर्निष्पन्नान् गुरुबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वान् ध्यायात् । तांश्च बाह्याध्यात्म्यपूजाभिः सम्पूज्य तदग्रे सप्तविधानुत्तरपूजां कुर्य्यात् । ततः शून्यतां विभाव्य ॐ स्वभावशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्म्माः स्वभावशुद्धोऽहमित्युच्चारयेत् । ततश्चन्द्रे ताँ सम्भूतां सितोत्पलस्थितां कारोद्भूतां तारां श्यामां द्विभुजां दक्षिणे वरदां वामे सनालेन्दीवरधरां सर्व्वाभरणभूषितां पद्मचन्द्रासने पर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां चिन्तयेत् । समयमुद्रां बन्धयेत् । हस्तद्वयेन सम्पुटाञ्जलि-कृत्वा तर्ज्जनीद्वयेन मध्यमे पिधायाङ्गुष्ठाग्रलग्ने विकचोत्पलमुद्रा । ततः ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा इति मन्त्रं जपेत् ।

॥ वरदतारासाधनम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

पूर्व्ववत् शून्यतापर्य्यन्तं विभाव्य पँकारजविश्वकमलमध्ये अकारजचन्द्रे श्यामताँकारजां तारां श्यामवर्णां सर्व्वालङ्कारधरां वामे नीलोत्पलवतीं दक्षिणे वरदां अर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां दक्षिणपार्श्वे अशोककान्तां पीतां नानारत्नमुकुटां वामदक्षिणहस्तयोरशोकपल्लवकुलिशधरां तथा महामायूरीं पीतां वामेतरकरयोर्मयूरपिच्छिकाचामरधारिणीं वामपार्श्वे एकजटां खर्व्वां कृष्णां व्याघ्राजिनधरां त्रिनेत्रां दंष्ट्राकरालवदनां ज्वलत्पिङ्गलोर्द्ध्वकेशां कर्त्रिकपालधारिणीं तथा आर्य्यजाङ्गुलीं श्यामां वामदक्षिणहस्तयोः कृष्णोरगचामरधारिणीं विभावयेत् । एवं च ध्यानात् खिन्नो मन्त्रं जपेत् । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा ।

॥ वश्याधिकारतारासाधनम् ॥

नमो वश्यतारायै

ताँकारजं ताँकाराकान्तमध्यमिन्दीवरं ध्यात्वा तत्परिणतामार्य्यतारां श्यामवर्णां वामेनोत्पलधरां दक्षिणे वरदां भद्रासनस्थिताममोघसिद्धिमुकुटीं ध्यात्वा ज्ञानसत्त्वेनैकीकृत्य ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकं

अमुकीं वा वशमानय स्वाहा इति साध्यनामसहितमनन्तरोक्तेन संख्यानियमेन जपेत्। शरादिचिह्नाभावेऽपि साध्यगलमुत्पलेन बद्धा स्वशरीरारुणकिरणसञ्चयैस्तच्छरीरमापूर्य्य स्ववशे स्थापयेदिति।

वज्जतारासाधनम्

नमोवजूतारायै

अथातः सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि वज्रताराप्रसाधनम्।
होमकर्म्मविधानेन सर्व्वकामार्थसाधकम्॥

तत्रेमानि मन्त्रपदानि भवन्ति—नम आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय तद्यथा ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वदुष्टप्रदुष्टान् मम कृते जम्भय स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् फट् फट् सर्व्वदुष्टस्तम्भनि तारे स्वाहा।

मातृमण्डलमध्यस्थां तारादेवीं विभावयेत्।
अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम्॥
कनकवर्णनिभां भव्यां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम्।
पञ्चबुद्धमहामुकुटीं वज्रसूर्य्याभिषेकजाम्॥

नवयौवनलावण्यां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम्।
विश्वपद्मसमासीनां रक्तप्रभाविभूषिताम्॥

वज्रपाश तथाशङ्खसच्छरोद्यतदक्षिणाम्।
वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलधनुस्तर्ज्जनीवामधारिणीम्।
वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगेन साधयेद् भुवनत्रयम्॥

पूर्व्वेण पुष्पतारां तु सितवर्णां मनोरमाम्।
ॐकाराक्षरनिष्पन्नां पुष्पदामकराकुलाम्॥

द्विभुजामेकवक्त्रां च सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम्।
दक्षिणे धूपतारां तु कृष्णवर्णां सुरूपिणीम्।
धूपशाखाकरव्यग्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम्।
पश्चिमे दीपतारां च दीपयष्टिकराकुलाम्॥

पीतवर्णां महाभूषां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम्।
उत्तरे गन्धतारां तु गन्धशङ्खकराकुलाम्॥

रक्तवर्णनिभां देवीं भावयेद् गर्भमण्डले।
द्वारपालीस्ततो ध्यायादङ्कुश्यादिप्रभेदतः॥

पूर्व्वद्वारे वज्राङ्कुशीमेकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलहस्तां विकृतवदनां कृष्णवर्णां, दक्षिणद्वारे वज्रपाशीं पीतवर्णां विकृताननां एकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां वज्रपाशहस्तां, पश्चिमद्वारे वज्रपाशहस्तां,

पश्चिमद्वारे वज्रस्फोटीं रक्तवर्णां एकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां विकृतवदनां बज्रस्फोटहस्तां, उत्तरद्वारे वज्रघण्टां श्वेतवर्णां एकवक्त्रां द्विभुजां विकृतवदनां ; एता आलीढपदस्थाः सूर्य्यासनाः सूर्य्यप्रभा ज्वालामालाकुला सर्पाभरणा द्रष्टव्याः ।

ऊर्द्ध्वे ऊष्णीषविजयामधः सुम्भां विभावयेत् ।
चक्रं च नागपाशं च ध्यात्वा मन्त्रं स्फुरन् जपेत् ॥

ॐ तारे तुत्तारे स्वाहा ।

दशाक्षरैर्दश देवत्यो दशपारमिताश्रयाः ।
भावनीयाः प्रयोगेन सर्व्वकार्य्यप्रसिद्धये ॥

एतन्मन्त्रवरं श्रेष्ठं सर्व्वबुद्धैर्नमस्कृतम् ।
पठितसिद्धिकरं तीव्रं वज्रपञ्जरभाषितम् ॥

अनेन मन्त्रेण पटाञ्चलं सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा ग्रन्थिं बद्धा विन्ध्यायामपि गच्छन् न केनाप्यवलीयते । व्याघ्रचौरनक्रसिंहसर्पदन्तिमहिषभल्लुकगवयादयो नामस्मरणमात्रेण नश्यन्ति विलीयन्ते । अनेन मन्त्रेणोत्पलानामष्टोत्तरशतं यावद् जुहूयात् । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे अमुकीं मे वशमानय स्वाहा, अनेनैव मन्त्रेण काकपक्षं द्वात्रिंशद् वारान् परिजप्यारिगृहे गोपयेत् सप्ताहेनोच्चाटयति । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे चल प्रचल शीघ्रगामिनि देवदत्तमुच्चाटय हुँ हुँ फट् ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां कुमारीं मह्यं विवाहेन तस्याः पिता प्रयच्छतु स्वाहा ।

मदनं चण्डबीजं तथोन्मत्तकमेव च ।
अशोकपत्रं पुष्पं च जुहूयात् सहस्रपञ्चकम् ॥

घृतमधुगुडहोमं कन्यासिद्धौ प्रशस्यते ।
सप्ताहेन तदा योगी लभेत् कन्यां स्ववाञ्छिताम् ॥

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां स्वस्थानत आकर्षय ममान्तिके जः, अनेन मन्त्रेण बदरीकण्टकानां पञ्चसहस्राणि स्वयम्भूकुसुमानि जुहूयात् । अनेन कृतेन नृपाणामपि कन्यामाकर्षयेदिति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । रजस्वलाकर्पटे भगवतीं द्विभुजामेकाननामङ्कुशोत्पलपाशहस्तां विलिख्य तस्याः पुरतः पूजां कृत्वा इमे पुष्पाः शुभा दिव्या इत्यादिना पश्चात् मन्त्रं जपेत् भावान्वितः—ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकीं मम ईप्सितस्वप्नं कथय हुँ फट् । पञ्चसहस्रेणागच्छति । पाशेन गलके बद्धा अङ्कुशेन विदार्य्य च साध्यं पादतले ध्यात्वा दासीरूपेण भुञ्जयेत् ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ताराधारणीं सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वाऽऽत्मनोऽक्षि द्वयं मार्जयेत् । राजकुलस्यान्तिके प्रविशेत् । अथ स राजा शिष्यवद् गौरवं करोति, विरुद्धं न वक्ति, प्रसादं च

प्रयच्छति, प्रियालापं कुरुते, दासतामुपैति, क्रुद्धोऽपि वशी भवेदिति दृष्टप्रत्ययः सद्भूतः ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ताराधारणीं शतधाऽऽवर्त्त्यं द्विवदनाशीविषं भस्म कृत्वा रक्तवर्णगोघृतेन अर्कतूलेन वर्त्ति कृत्वा प्रज्वाल्याञ्जनं पातयेत् । तमञ्जनं वज्रतूर्य्यवज्रधर्म्माभ्यां सम्मर्द्य परमान्नेन धूपयेत् । भस्मना सार्द्धमक्षिमञ्जयेत् । यां पश्यति चक्षुर्वज्रेण सा यदि पद्मनर्त्तेश्वरं न रक्षति तदाऽहं तारा न भवेयम्, घातिताश्च बुद्धा भगवन्तो मया भवेयुरिति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । अदशनशिशुलोलां गृहीत्वा ताराधारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा भृङ्गराजमूलेन गोरोचनया सार्द्धमेकीकृत्य ललाटे तिलकं परिधाय यां पश्यति, तां वश्यां कुरुते नान्यं रमते, नान्यस्मिन् गच्छति, स्वयं न त्यजति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । उदरकीटं ताराधारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा वज्रधर्म्मेण सार्द्धं कन्यायै ताम्बूलेन दद्यात् । अभ्यवहृते योगवरेण मुञ्चसि, नान्यं रमते, नान्यस्मिन् गच्छति, स्वपति त्यजति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । महातैलेनात्मानमभ्यङ्ग्यताराधारणीं जपेदयुतमेकं भावनान्वितः । जपान्ते शालिपिष्टकुड्मलया शष्कुलिका यस्यै दीयते, सा पञ्चतायामपि न मुञ्चेदिति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । चन्द्रोपरागसमये ताराधारणीं जपन् सेवां कृत्वा तद्भूतलोकेश्वरं गृह्य शङ्खचूर्णे भावयेत् । प्रमदायै दातव्यम् । पञ्चतायामपि तमनुवर्त्तते ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ताराधारणीमन्त्रेण मदनफलमष्टोत्तरशतवारान् परिजप्य तेन फलेन हयग्रीवेन सार्द्धं यां रक्षति सा वश्या भवति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकस्य बन्धनमुक्तिं कुरु मुः स्वाहा, अनेन मन्त्रेणार्कदलं साध्यनामविदर्भितं संलिख्य कुलीरगर्त्ते स्थापयेत्, बन्धनमुक्तिर्भवति ।

॥ वज्रतारासाधनम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

अथातः सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि वज्रताराप्रसाधनम् ।
होमकर्म्मविधानेन सर्व्वकामार्थसाधनम् ॥

तत्रेमानि मन्त्रपदानि भवन्ति । तद्यथा, नम आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय, तद्यथा, ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वदुष्टप्रदुष्टान् मम कृते जम्भय स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् फट् फट्, सर्व्वदुष्टस्तम्भनि तारे स्वाहा । तत्रादौ तावत् स्वहृदि चन्द्रमण्डले ताँकारबीजं ध्यात्वा तद्रश्मिसमाकृष्टगुरुबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वान् नानाविधपूजादिभिः सम्पूज्य पापदेशनादिकं कृत्वा त्रिशरणगाथां पठेत् । ततश्चतुर्ब्रह्मविहारान् भावयित्वा ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहमिति मन्त्र मुच्चारयेत् । ततः पँकारजपद्मे चन्द्रमण्डलोपरि ताँकारबीजं पुनरपि ध्यात्वा तत्परिणामेन—

मातृमण्डलमध्यस्थां तारादेवीं विभावयेत् ।
अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

कनकवर्णनिभां भव्यां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम् ।
विश्वपद्मसमासीनचन्द्रासनसुसंस्थिताम् ॥

पोतकृष्णसितरक्तसव्यावर्त्तचतुर्मुखाम् ।
प्रतिमुखं त्रिनेत्रां च वज्रपर्य्यङ्कसंस्थिताम् ॥

रक्तप्रभां चतुर्बुद्धमुकुटीं वज्रशरशङ्खवरदसदक्षिणलसत्करां उत्पलचापवज्राङ्कुशवज्रपाशसतर्ज्जनीवामसत्कराम्—

वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगेन साधयेद् भुवनत्रयम् ।
तदग्रतः पुष्पतारां सितवर्णां मनोरमाम् ॥

ॐकाराक्षरनिष्पन्नां पुष्पदामकराकुलाम् ।
द्विभुजां चैकवक्त्रां तु सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

दक्षिणे धूपतारां च कृष्णवर्णां सुरूपिणीम् ।
धूपघटीकरव्यग्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारशोभिताम् ॥

पश्चिमे दीपतारां च पीतवर्णां मनोहराम् ।
दीपयष्टिधरां दिव्यां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ॥

उत्तरे गन्धतारां वै गन्धशङ्खकराकुलाम् ।
रक्तवर्णनिभां देवीं भावयेद् गर्भमण्डले ॥

एता एकवक्त्रा द्विभुजाः सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिता वज्रपर्य्यङ्किन्यश्चेति । एताः षड् देव्य ईषत्करालवदना ललिताक्षेपसंस्थिताः । एताः सर्व्वा मण्डलवक्रे ध्यात्वा हृद्बीजरश्मिसमानीतज्ञानचक्रं जः हुं-वं-होरित्येतैराकर्षणादिकं कुर्य्यात् ।

पूर्व्वद्वारे ततो ध्यायाद् वज्राङ्कुशीं सितद्युतिम् ।
वज्राङ्कुशसचिह्नककरात्मक मनोहराम् ॥

दक्षिणद्वारे वज्रपाशीं कृष्णामतिरतिप्रियाम् ।
दिव्यालङ्कारभूषाङ्गीं वज्रपाशधरां वराम् ॥

वज्रस्फोटां पीतवर्णां वज्रस्फोटाङ्कसत्कराम् ।
चिन्तयेत् पश्चिमे द्वारे नानालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

वज्रघण्टामुत्तरद्वारे वज्रघण्टायुधामथ ।
रक्तवर्णां शुभां शश्वत् पश्येद् वै दिव्यरूपिणीम् ॥

ऊर्द्ध्वें उष्णीषविजयां पीतवर्णां सुरूपिणीम् ।
ध्यायात् सम्बोधिफलदां मन्त्री चक्रधरां ततः ॥

तद्गर्भमण्डलस्याधः कृष्णवर्णां विभावयेत् ।
सुम्भां भास्वरसद्रूपां नागपाशलसत्कराम् ॥

द्विभुजा एकवदनाः सर्व्वा ज्ञेया मनोहराः ।
अक्षरैर्दशभिश्चैता देवत्यो दश निर्म्मिताः ।
वशपारमिताः शुद्धाः सर्व्वकर्म्मप्रसिद्धये ॥

तत्र दशाक्षराणि—ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा। तथा चित्तवाक्कायाधिष्ठानाभिषेकबिन्दुसूक्ष्मयोगजापादयोऽपि ध्यातव्या इति ।

एतन्मन्त्रवरं श्रेष्ठं सर्व्वबुद्धैर्नमस्कृतम् ।
पठितं सिद्धिकरं दिव्यं वज्रपञ्जरभाषितम् ॥ इति ।

अत्रायं उपचारः। अनेन मन्त्रेण पटाञ्चलं गृहीत्वा सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा ग्रन्थिं बद्धा विन्ध्याटवीमपि गच्छन्न केनाप्यवलीयते, व्याघ्रचौरनक्रसिंहसर्पदन्तिमहिषभल्लुकगवयाश्वादयो नश्यन्ति विलीयन्त इति। तथा अनेन मन्त्रेणोत्पलानामष्टोत्तरशतं जुहूयात्, ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकीं मे वशमानय स्वाहा ।यामिच्छति तां वशमानयति । तथा अनेन मन्त्रेण काकपक्षं द्वात्रिंशद्वारान् परिजप्यारिगृहे गोपयेत्, सप्ताहेनोच्चाटयति—ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे चल प्रचल शीघ्रगामिनि देवदत्तमुच्चाटय हुँ फट्। इति उच्चाटनविधिः ।

अथापरः प्रयोगः। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां कुमारीं मह्यमुद्वाहेन तस्याः पिता प्रयच्छतु स्वाहा ।

मदनं चण्डबीजं च उन्मत्तकफलं तथा ।
अशोकपत्रं पुष्पं च जुहुयात् सहस्रपञ्चकम् ॥

घृतमधुगुडहोमं वै कन्यासिद्धौ प्रशस्यते ।
सप्ताहेन ततो योगी लभेत् कन्यां स्ववाञ्छिताम् ॥

अथापरः प्रयोगः । ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां स्वस्थानत आकर्षय ममान्तिके जः इत्यनेन मन्त्रेण बदरकण्टकानि पञ्चसहस्राणि स्वयम्भूकुसुमानि होतव्यानि । एतेन नृपाणामपि कन्यामाकर्षयति ।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। रजःस्वलाकर्पटे भगवतीं द्विभुजामेकवक्त्रामङ्कुशपाशोत्पलहस्तां विलिख्य तस्याः पुरतः पूजां कृत्वा इमे पुष्पाः शुभा दिव्या इत्यादिना मन्त्रं जपेत् भावनान्वितः—ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकीं ममेप्सितं स्वप्नं कथय हुँ फट्। पञ्चसहस्रेणागच्छति।

पाशेन गलकं बद्धा अङ्कुशेन विदार्य्य च।
चरणावुत्पलेनैव बद्धाऽऽकृष्य समन्ततः।
साध्यं पादतले ध्यात्वा दासीरूपेण भुञ्जयेत्॥

अथापरः प्रयोगः। ताराधारणीं सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा अक्षिद्वयमञ्जयेत्। राजकुलस्यान्तिके प्रविशति, स राजा गौरवादिकं करोति, एकान्ततो वश्यो भवतीति।

अथापरः प्रयोगः। ताराधारणीं शतधाऽऽवर्त्य द्विवदनमाशीविषं भस्म कृत्वा रक्तवर्णगोघृतेनार्कतूलेन वर्त्तिकां च कृत्वा प्रज्वाल्याञ्जनं पातयेत्। तमञ्जनं सूर्य्यवज्राभ्यां सम्पाद्य परमान्नेन धूपयेत्। तद्भस्मना सार्द्धमक्षि अञ्जयेत्। यां पश्यति चक्षुर्वज्रेण सा यदि पद्मनर्त्तेश्वरं न रक्षति, तदाऽहं तारा न भवेयम्, घातिताश्च मे बुद्धा भगवन्तो भवेयुरिति।

अथापरः प्रयोगः। उदरकीटकं धारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा वज्रधर्म्मेण सार्द्धमेकीकृत्य ताम्बूलेन दद्यात्। अभ्यवहरति अनेन प्रयोगवरेण मुञ्चति स्वपत्नीवाचरति।

अथापरः प्रयोगो भवति। अदशनशिशुलोलां गृहीत्वा ताराधारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा भृङ्गराजगोरोचनया सार्द्धमेकीकृत्य ललाटे तिलकं परिधाय यां पश्यति तां वशं कुरुते।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगः। महातैलेनात्मानमभ्यङ्ग्य ताराधारणीमयुतमपि जपेत्, भावयन् जपान्ते शालिपिष्टकेन 'कुड्मल्या शष्कुलिकां' कृत्वा यस्मै दीयते स पञ्चतायामपि न मुञ्चति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगः। चन्द्रोपरागसमये ताराधारणीं जपन, सेवां च कुर्व्वन्, तद्भूतलोकेश्वरेण शङ्खचूर्णं भावयेत्। तद् यस्या दीयते सा [यावत्] पञ्चत्वमनुवर्त्तते।

अपरः प्रयोगः। ताराधारण्या मदनफलमष्टोत्तरशतवारान् परिजप्य तेन फलेन हयग्रीवेण सार्द्धं यां म्रक्षति सा वश्या भवति।

अपरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकस्य बन्धनमुक्तिं कुरु स्वाहा अनेन मन्त्रेणार्कदले साध्यनामविदर्भितं विलिख्य कुलीरगर्त्ते गोपयेत्, बन्धनमुक्तिर्भवति।

॥ वज्रतारासाधनम् ॥

नमो वज्रतारायै।

वज्रतारां नमस्कृत्य गुरुपूर्व्वक्रमागताम्।
तस्याश्च साधनं स्पष्टं लिख्यते स्मृतये मया॥

मनोऽनुकूले स्थाने सुखासनोपविष्टो योगी ॐ रक्ष रक्ष हुँ हुँ फट् स्वाहा इति स्थानात्मयोगरक्षां कृत्वा हृच्चन्द्रे ताँकारं दृष्ट्वा तद्रश्मिभिः समाकृष्टां भगवतीं वज्रतारां समाण्डलेयां वक्ष्यमाणभुजायुधां समालम्ब्याकाशे पुष्पादिभिः सम्पूज्य—

रत्नत्रयं मे शरणं सर्व्वं प्रतिदिशाम्यघम् ।
अनुमोदे जगत्पुण्यं बुद्धबोधौ दधे मनः ॥

इत्युच्चार्य्यं मैत्र्यादिभावनां कुर्य्यात् । सर्व्वसत्त्वा मया संसारदुःखादुद्धृत्य महासुखे बुद्धत्वे प्रतिष्ठापयितव्या इति सर्व्वाकारवरोपेतशून्यतां भावयेत् । चित्तमेवेदं भ्रान्तं तेन तेनाकारेण प्रतिभासते । यथा स्वप्ने चित्तादन्यत्र ग्राह्यं न विद्यते ग्राह्याभावात्, चित्तमपि ग्राहकं न भवति, तस्माद् विश्वमिदं निःस्वभावं प्रकृतिपरिशुद्धं आद्यमनुत्पन्नं पश्येत् ।

तदनु आकाशे पूर्व्वप्रणिधानबलादुत्पन्नं शुद्धलौकिकविज्ञानस्वभावं रेफोद्भवं सूर्य्यमण्डलं तदुपरि कृष्णहुँकारेण परिणतां शुक्लधर्म्मोदयां ऊर्द्ध्वस्थितां त्रिकोणां अन्तःशुषिरां विश्वपद्मविश्ववज्राधिष्ठितमध्यां ध्यात्वा विश्ववज्रवेदिकायां चत्वारि महाभूतानि भावयेत् । लँकारजं पृथ्वीमण्डलं पीतं चतुरस्रं कोणेषु त्रिसूचिकवज्राङ्कितम्, तदूर्द्ध्वे वँकारजं वरुणमण्डलं शुक्लं वर्त्तुलघटाङ्कम्, तदुपरि रेफपरिणतमग्निमण्डलं त्रिकोणं कोणेषु रेफाङ्कितम्, तदुपरि यँकारपरिणतं वायुमण्डलमर्द्धचन्द्राकारमन्तद्वयेन चलत्पताकाङ्कितं धूम्रवर्णं चिन्तयित्वा, तत्परिणतं कूटागारं पञ्चरत्नमयं चतुरस्रं चतुस्तोरणभूषितं हारार्द्धहारपट्टस्रग्दाममण्डितं अष्टस्तम्भोपशोभितं स्तम्भोपरि वलयवज्रावलीवृतं मध्यपुटेषु पञ्चसु हारेषु अथ ऊर्द्ध्वे च विश्वपद्मम् । तत्र मध्यासने अकारादिषोडशस्वरपरिणामेन चन्द्रमण्डलमादर्शज्ञानस्वभावं तदुपरि ककारादिचतुस्त्रिंशद्व्यञ्जनैः सूर्य्यमण्डलं तयोरेकतां समताज्ञानं तदुपरि ताँकारजोत्पलकर्णिकायां चन्द्रस्थतांकारं प्रत्यवेक्षणाज्ञानं तद्बीजरश्मिभिराकृष्टानां सर्व्वतथागतानां प्रवेशे कृत्यानुष्ठानज्ञानं तदनु भगवत्या निष्पत्तिः सुविशुद्धधर्म्मधातुज्ञानं तदनु भगवत्या निष्पत्तिः सुविशुद्धधर्म्मधातुज्ञानम् । एवं पञ्चाकाराणि सम्बोधिक्रमेणैव ताँकारनिर्गतस्वबीजचिन्हपरिणामनिष्पन्नदशदेवत्या सहैव निष्पन्नां तां भगवतीं चिन्तयेत् पीतवर्णां पीतकृष्णारक्तवेशतमिति चतुर्वक्त्रामष्टभुजां वज्रपाशशङ्खशरवरददक्षिणकरां वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलकार्म्मुकतर्ज्जनीवामकरां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषितां रक्तप्रभाविभूषितां नवयौवनां वज्रपर्य्यङ्किनीं विश्वपद्मासनस्थितां पञ्चतथागतमुकुटिनीं ध्यायात् ।

पूर्व्वदले पुष्पतारां श्वेतां ॐकारजां द्विभुजां पुष्पमालाधारिणीं सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम्, तांकारेण दक्षिणे धूपतारां कृष्णां धूपशाखाकराम्, रेकारेण पश्चिमे दीपतारां पीतां दीपयष्टिकराम्, तुकारेण उत्तरे गन्धतारां रक्तां गन्धशङ्खकरां ध्यायात् ; गर्भमण्डले ताकारेण अङ्कुशतारां अङ्कुशहस्ताम्, दक्षिणे रेकारेण पाशतारां कृष्णवज्रपाशहस्तां, पश्चिमे तुकारेण स्फोटतारां पीतवर्णां निगडहस्ताम्, उत्तरे रेकारेणावेशतारां रक्तां घण्टाकराम्, अधसि स्वाकारेण सुम्भतारां कृष्णां नागपाश कराम्, ऊर्द्ध्वे पाकारेण उष्णीषविजयतारां पीतां चक्रधरां ध्यायात् ।

तदनु हृच्चन्द्रस्थितचिह्नबीजपरिणतज्ञानसत्त्वहृच्चन्द्रे ताँकारं दृष्ट्वा तद्रश्मिभिर्ज्ञानमण्डलमाकृष्य सम्पूज्य जः हुँ वँ होः इत्यनेन मन्त्रेण आकर्षणप्रवेशनबन्धनतोषणं कुर्य्यात् । तदनु चक्षुरादिषु मोहवज्रादयः षट् चिन्तनीयाः, कायवाक्चित्तेषु ॐ-आः-हुँकारपरिणताः खेचरीभूचरीनैरात्माश्चिन्तनीयाः । तदनु हृद्बीजरश्मिभिराकृष्टान् तथागतान् सम्पूज्य अभिषेकं प्रार्थयेत् । अभिषिञ्चन्तु मां सर्व्वतथागता इति । तैस्तथागतैर्ज्ञानामृतपूर्णकलशैरभिषिच्यते । अभिषिच्यमानानां अभिषेकजिनाः शिरसि जायन्ते । तत्र भगवत्या रत्नसम्भवः, पुष्पताराादीनां यथाक्रमं वैरोचनाक्षोभ्यामिताभाऽमोघसिद्धयः, अङ्कुशतारादीनामपि ते एव । अधोदेवत्यूर्द्ध्वदेवत्योरक्षोभ्यवैरोचनौ हृद्बीजनिर्गतपुष्पादिभिः

सम्पूज्य, वीणादिभिः संस्तुत्य, रत्नवज्रादिभिः ढौकितं समासाद्य, प्रत्येकं स्फुरणेनाखेदनपर्य्यन्तेन जगदर्थं कारयित्वा पुष्पादयः क्रमेण भगवत्या हृदये प्रतिष्ठाश्चिन्तनीयाः। भगवत्या अपि स्फुरणयोगेन सर्वमेव विश्वमायोपमस्वप्नोपमविज चिन्ताधीनमाकलय्य स्वहृद्बीजे प्रतिष्ठा ध्येया तदनु तद्बीजं रश्मिपुञ्जाकारं क्रमावलीनं सूक्ष्मबिन्दुरूपं महासुखमयं ध्यात्वा तमपि निरुपलब्धिं कुर्य्यात्। पुनर्झटिति आविर्भूतं मण्डलं दृष्ट्वा बलिं दद्यात् ॐ अकारो मुखं सर्व्वधर्म्माणा आद्यमनुत्पन्नत्वात्। ॐ आः हुँ फट् स्वाहा इत्यनेन मन्त्रेण दिक्पालेभ्यः। तदनु मन्त्रं जपेत् ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा। मालामन्त्रं वा ॐ आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय, तद्यथा, ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वदुष्टप्रदुष्टानां मम कृते जम्भय स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् फट् फट् सर्व्वदुष्टस्तम्भनि तारे स्वाहा।

विधाय वज्रतारायाः साधनं यन्मयार्ज्जितम्।
शुभं तेन जनाः सर्व्वे मन्त्रसम्बुद्धभास्कराः॥

॥ वज्रतारासाधनम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

वज्रतारां नमस्कृत्य सितवर्णाम् मनोरमाम्।
तत्साधनविधिं वक्ष्ये सर्वसत्त्वार्थहेतुना॥

इह भावनाधिकृतो योगी स्वहृदि चन्द्रमण्डले तांकारं विचिन्त्य मुखशौचादिकं कुर्य्यात्। अत्यन्तसुखासनोपविष्टः स्वहृद्बीजात् रश्मिं निश्चार्य्य तेन रश्मिनाऽऽकृष्य ताराभट्टारिकां पुरतोऽन्तरीक्षेऽवस्थाप्य गुरुबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वांश्च पुरतः पापदेशनादिकं कुर्य्यात्। पापदेशना अकरणसंवरं अनुमोदना परिणामना त्रिशरणगमनं बोधिचित्तोत्पादनं मार्गाश्रयणं चतुर्ब्रह्मविहारीभावना। ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहमिति शून्यताभावनां च विभाव्य बिम्बनिष्पत्तिभावनां च भावयेत्। ततः पँकारपरिणतं सितमष्टदलकमलं तस्योपरि अकारपरिणतं चन्द्रं चन्द्रोपरि ताँकारपरिणतं सितमुत्पलं उत्पलमध्ये चन्द्रं चन्द्रमध्ये ताँकारं ताँकाराद् गगनतलं विश्वं च तारारूपेण संस्फार्य्य तारारूपेण त्रिभुवनस्थितान् सत्त्वान् व्यवस्थाप्य पुनस्तत्रैव ताँकारे संस्फार्य्य उत्पलचन्द्रे ताँकारपरिणतताराभट्टारिकारूपेणात्मानं पश्यति। सितवर्णां सितकमलोपरि चन्द्रासनस्थां वज्रपर्य्यङ्किनी सितचन्द्राश्रितां षोडशाब्दवपुष्मतीं नानाभरणभूषितां दक्षिणे हस्ते वरदां वामेनोत्पलधारिणीं अशेषमारविध्वंसन्तीं स्वकायरोमकूपतो बुद्धबोधिसत्त्वान् स्फुरन्तीं भावयेत्। ईदृशीं भावनां स्थिरीकृत्य मन्त्रं जपेत्। स्वहृदि सितमष्टारचक्रं विचिन्त्य अरं प्रति अष्टौ अक्षरान् विभाव्य मध्ये स्वाहाकारं दत्त्वा जपेत्, मनसा वाचयेन्मन्त्रं ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा। अनेन चिन्तितमात्रेण सर्व्वमारैरवध्यो भवेत्।

कविता वक्तृता चैव प्रज्ञा चात्यन्तनिर्म्मला।
कल्पान्तं जीवनोपायमुक्तं वज्रभृता स्वयम्॥

राजानो वशगास्तस्य शान्ताः पुरजनैः सह ।
अप्यखण्डितरोमात्मा सर्व्वशत्रुषु सर्व्वदा ।।

वज्रतारा महातेजाः सर्व्वसिद्धिप्रदायिका ।
दत्त्वा तु दक्षिणां वाऽपि सुवर्णरजतादिकम् ।।

श्रोतव्यं परया भक्त्या पण्डितेन महात्मना ।
अभिषेकाग्रलब्धो यो गुरुभक्तिपरात्मकः ।।

स श्रोता च भवेदत्र प्रोक्तो जिनगणैः सदा ।
अन्यथा नैव सिद्धयति यदि साक्षात् स्वयं जिनः ।।

।। वज्रतारासाधनं समाप्तम् ।।

नमस्तारायै

प्रथमं तावन्मन्त्री स्वहृद्यकारपरिणतं चन्द्रमण्डलं तत्र स्थितताँकारं पीतवर्णं तत्परिणतं नवसूचिकवज्रं तद्वरटके ताँकारं भावयेत् । तद्रश्मिभिरानीतज्ञानसत्त्वस्वभावां भगवतीं वक्ष्यमाणभुजचिह्नालङ्कृतां अष्टभुजां चतुर्वक्त्रां वज्रपर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां दशदेवतीपरिवृतां नभसि दृष्ट्वा स्वहृद्बीजनिर्गतपुष्पादिपञ्चोपचारपूजाभिः सम्पूज्य पापदेशना-पुण्यानुमोदना-त्रिशरणगमन-बोधिचित्तोत्पादमैत्री-करुणामुदितोपेक्षा भावयेत् । ततः सर्व्वधर्म्मानात्मानं च स्वप्नोपमं निःस्वभावं आद्यमनुत्पन्नमधिमुच्य मन्त्रमुच्चारयेत् ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहम् । तदनन्तरं बोधिचित्तमनुस्मृत्य आकाशे रँकारपरिणतं सूर्य्यमण्डलं तत्र हुँकारपरिणतं त्रिसूचिकवज्रं तद्रश्मिसम्भूतं तावदिच्छाविस्तरं जाज्वल्यमानं वज्रप्राकारं तद्रश्मिनिर्म्मितवज्रपञ्जरं वज्रभूमिं बाह्यसीमाबन्धं च ध्यात्वा तद्रश्मिभिर्विघ्नानुत्सार्य्य पञ्जरमध्ये आकाशस्वभावां धर्म्मोदयामेकाराकारां अधः सूक्ष्माग्रामुपरि विशाखां शुक्लां विभावयेत् । तन्मध्ये गगनस्वरूपविश्वदलकमलकर्णिकास्थितनिर्सूचिकवज्जं तद्वेदिकाव्यादीनि चतुर्म्महाभूतमण्डलानि । यँकारपरिणतं अर्द्धचन्द्राकारं नीलं 'वायुमण्डलं कटिद्वये ललत्पताकाङ्कितम्, तदुपरि रँकारजं अग्निमण्डलं त्रिकोणे रक्तं कोणेषु' रेफाङ्कं तस्योपरि वँकारजं वरुणमण्डलं वर्त्तुलं सितघण्टाङ्कं तदुपरि लँकारजं माहेन्द्रमण्डलं पीतं चतुरस्रं कोणेषु त्रिसूचिकवज्राङ्कितं तत्स्वभावं मायोपमं विज्ञानं विदित्वा चतुर्म्महाभूतपरिणामजं परिशुद्धबुद्धक्षेत्रसंक्षेपरूपं महामोक्षपुरं वैरोचनस्वभावं विश्ववज्रवेदिकामध्ये नानारत्नमयं कूटागारम्—

चतुरस्रं चतुर्द्वारमष्टस्तम्भोपशोभितम् ।
चतुर्वेदीपरिक्षिप्तं चतुस्तोरणमण्डितम् ।।

हारार्द्धहारपट्टादर्शचामरविचित्रपताकाघण्टाविभूषितम् । तस्य गर्भपुटे अष्टदलं पद्मं सकेशरं वरटकोपरि अकारपरिणतं चन्द्रमण्डलमादर्शज्ञानस्वभावं तस्योपरि ताँकारं पीतं समताज्ञानस्वभावं

सूर्य्यमण्डलाक्रान्तम् । ततः ताँकारपरिगतं कनकवर्णं नवसूचिकवज्रं बीजगर्भप्रत्यवेक्षणास्वभावं तन्निर्गतरश्मिभिः स्फुरित्वा दशसु दिक्षु भगवत्याकारैः सत्त्वार्थं कृत्वा पुनस्तत्रैव बीजचिह्नसंहरणकृत्यानुष्ठानस्वभावम् । ततो बीजचिह्नचन्द्रसूर्य्यपरिणतां भगवतीं सुविशुद्धधर्म्मधातुस्वभावाम्—

वज्रतारां चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ।
अष्टभुजां कनकवर्णां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम् ॥

नवयौवनकान्तिमतीं चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ।
चतुर्बुद्धमहामुकुटीं पद्मरागप्रभान्विताम् ॥

वज्रपाशं शरं शङ्खं बिभ्रती दक्षिणैः करैः ।
वामैः पीतोत्पलं चापमङ्कुशं तर्ज्जनीं तथा ॥

हेमाभं प्रथमं वक्त्रं शुक्लदक्षिणमुत्तरम् ।
लोहितं पश्चिमं नीलं वज्रपर्य्यङ्कमासनम् ॥

मन्त्रो हृद्बीजसम्भूतो मण्डलाधिपतेर्मुखात् ।
निर्गतो दशदेवीनां विभक्तो बीजतां गतः ॥

ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा । पूर्व्वदिग्दलेषु चन्द्रमण्डलस्थानि ॐ तारेतु अक्षराणि पूर्व्वादिविग्द्वारेषु सूर्य्यमण्डलस्थानि त्तारेतुरे अक्षराणि ऊर्द्ध्वं सूर्य्यमण्डलस्थं स्वाक्ष-रमधः सूर्य्यमण्डलस्थं हाक्षरं तद्बीजाक्षरपरिणतानि चिह्नानि बीजगर्भाणि भावयित्वा तद्रश्मिभिः स्फुरणसंहरणं कृत्वा तद्बीजचिह्नपरिणता देव्यः—

विज्ञेया दश देवत्यो दशभूमिस्वरूपतः ।
वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगिन्य एकास्या द्विभुजाश्च ताः ॥

चन्द्रस्थां पूर्व्वतस्तारां शुक्लवर्णां विभूषिताम् ।
पुष्पदामान्वितकरां भावयेत् प्रणवोद्भवाम् ॥

दक्षिणे धूपतारां तु कृष्णां ताकारसम्भवाम् ।
धूपशाखान्वितकरां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

पश्चिमे दीपतारां च पीतवर्णां सुभूषिताम् ।
दीपवृक्षान्वितकरां चन्द्रे रेकारसम्भवाम् ॥

चन्द्रे तुकारसम्भूतां गन्धतारां तथोत्तरे ।
गन्धशङ्खोद्यतकरां रक्तवर्णां सुभूषिताम् ॥

विदिग्दले तथा चिह्नमक्षोभ्यादिप्रभेदतः ।
वज्रचक्रं तथा पद्मं शङ्खं तद्वर्णभेदतः ॥

द्वारपालीस्तथा ध्यायात् सूर्य्यस्थाः सर्प्पभूषणाः ।
पूर्व्वद्वारेऽङ्कुशीं शुक्लां बीजत्ताकारसम्भवाम् ॥

दक्षिणे अङ्कुशधरां वामतो दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ।
दक्षिणे पाशीं पीतां बीजरेकारसम्भवाम् ॥

सपाशतर्ज्जनीहस्तां रक्तमण्डलसंश्रिताम् ।
स्फोटां च पश्चिमे रक्तां तुबीजाक्षरसम्भवाम् ॥

वज्राणीं तर्ज्जनीहस्तां वज्रमण्डलसुस्थिताम् ।
श्यामामुत्तरतो घण्टां बीजरेकारसम्भवाम् ।

वज्रघण्टान्वितकरां रश्मिस्थां वामतर्ज्जनीम् ॥
कोणभागेषु चिह्नानि मामक्यादिविशुद्धितः ।

बोधिचित्तघटो मेरुर्वह्निकुण्डं महाध्वजः ॥
ऊर्द्ध्वे चोष्णोषविजयां सूर्य्ये स्वाकारसम्भवाम् ।

शुक्लवज्रधरां शुक्लां वामे च रिपुतर्ज्जनीम् ॥
नागपाशधरां नीलां सूर्य्ये हाकारसम्भवाम् ।
वामे च तर्ज्जनीं घोरामधः सुम्भां विभावयेत् ॥

सर्व्वासां चक्षुराद्यधिष्ठानं मोहवज्रां न्यस्येत् ।

नेत्रद्वयेषु वज्रां च कर्णयोर्मात्सर्यिकां तथा। घ्राणे वक्त्रे तु रागवज्रिकाम् ।

काये चेर्ष्यावज्रां तु मनो नैरात्म्ययोगिनी ॥

इति चक्षुराद्यधिष्ठानं कृत्वा कायवाक्चित्ताधिष्ठानं ॐकारेण कायाधिष्ठानं आःकारेण वागधिष्ठानं हुँकारेण चित्ताधिष्ठानम् । ततः सर्व्वासां देवतीनां हृदि चन्द्रमण्डलस्थं बीजाक्षरं पश्येत् ।

ततो रश्मिभिरानीतं ज्ञानसत्त्वस्य मण्डलम् ॥

पुष्पतारादिदेवताभिः स्फुरित्वा सर्व्वपूजाभिः पूजयेत् । ततो ज्ञानसत्त्वमण्डलं द्वारपालीप्रयोगेन समयमण्डले प्रवेशयेत् ॐ वज्राङ्कुशि आकर्षय जः, ॐ वज्रपाशि प्रवेशय हुँ, ॐ वज्रस्फोट बन्धय यँ, ॐ वज्रावेश वशीकुरु होः । तदनन्तरं स्वहृद्बीजनिर्गतरश्मिभिः त्रैधातुकस्थितान् बुद्धानानीय सम्पूज्य मातृभिरनुनाथ्यते, अभिषिञ्चन्तु मां सर्व्वतथागता बुद्धज्ञानेनेति । ततस्तैर्बुद्धैः हेरुकरूपैः पञ्चामृतभूतपञ्चतथागतात्मकैः कलशैः पञ्चभिरभिषिच्यते । अभिषिच्यमाने पुष्पकुङ्कुमवृष्टिर्दुन्दुभिशब्दश्च भवति, देवताभिः पूज्यते स्तूयते च । अभिषिक्ते मूर्द्धि रत्नसम्भव उत्पद्यते, मध्यपुटदेवतीनां यथाक्रमं वैरोचनाक्षोभ्यामिताभाऽमोघसिद्धिस्तथागता द्वारपालीनां मुकुटेषु भवन्ति । उष्णीषाया रत्नेशः,

सुम्भाया मुकुटे अक्षोभ्य उत्पद्यते। ततो भगवतीं निर्म्माणकायैः सर्व्वासु दिक्षु सत्त्वार्थं कुर्व्वन्तीं दृष्ट्वा मन्त्रं जपेत् ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा।

एतन्मन्त्रवरं श्रेष्ठं सर्व्वबुद्धैर्नमस्कृतम्।
पठितसिद्धिकरं दिव्यं वज्रपञ्जरभाषितम्॥

अथापरोऽपि धारणीमन्त्रः—नम आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय तद्यथा ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वदुष्टप्रदुष्टान् मम कृते जम्भय स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् फट् फट् सर्व्वदुष्टस्तम्भनि तारे स्वाहा।

॥ वज्रतारासाधनं समाप्तम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

तारां प्रणम्य महतीं जननीं जिनानां
निःशेषदोषरहितां गुणिनां हिताय।
तत्साधनं सुविशदैः सुपदैश्च भक्त्या
संलिख्यते वचनतः सुहृदामिहापि॥
नापूर्व्वं लिख्यते किञ्चित् किन्तु वाक्याद् गुरोरपि।
श्रुतं यत् तदपि स्मर्त्तुं संक्षेपतः प्रलिख्यते॥

प्रथमं तावत् प्रातरुत्थाय मन्त्री मुखचरणादिकं प्रक्षाल्य पवित्रीभूय विजने मनोऽनुकूले सुगन्धोपलिप्ते सुरभिकुसुमावकीर्णे च भूप्रदेशे सुखासनोपविष्टः स्वहृदये प्रथमस्वरपरिणतं शीतांशुमण्डलं विचिन्त्य तन्मध्ये कमनोयनीलनीरजं तत्किञ्जल्के निष्कलङ्कशशाङ्कमण्डलं तदुपरि पीततांकारबीजं पश्येत्। ततोऽपि पीततांकारबीजात् निःसृत्य जगन्मोहान्धकारापहारिभिर्मयूखसमूहैर्दशसु दिक्षु ये चापर्य्यन्ता लोकधातवो विद्यन्ते, तान् सर्व्वानवभास्य तत्रस्थानप्यसंख्येयानप्रमेयान् बुद्धबोधिसत्त्वांश्चाकाशदेशेऽप्यानीयावस्थाप्यन्ते। तदनु तेषामाकाशदेशावस्थितानां महाकारुणिकानां बुद्धबोधिसत्त्वानां दिव्यपुष्पधूपगन्धमाल्यविलेपनचूर्णचीवरच्छत्रध्वजघण्टापताकादिभिर्महतीं पूजां कृत्वा पापदेशनां कुर्य्यात्। यत्किञ्चिदनादिसंसारे संसरता मया पापकं कर्म्म कायेन वा मनसाऽपि कृतं कारितं क्रियमाणमनुमोदितं वा तत् सर्व्वं प्रतिदेशयामि, इत्यनेन विधिना प्रतिदेश्य पुनरकरणसंवरं प्रतिगृह्य पुण्यानुमोदनं कुर्य्यात्। सुगतप्रत्येकश्रावकजिनानां तत्सुतानामपि बोधिसत्त्वानां सदेवकसब्रह्मकलोकानां यत् कुशलं तत् सर्व्वमनुमोदयामीति। तदनु रत्नत्रयशरणगमनम्—

बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि यावदाबोधिमण्डलः।

धर्म्मं शरणं गच्छामि यावदाबोधिमण्डलः।
सङ्घं शरणं गच्छामि यावदाबोधिमण्डलः॥

पश्चात् मार्गाश्रयणम्, मार्गस्तथागतोक्तः स चाश्रयणीयो मया नान्य इति । तदनु अध्येषणां कुर्य्यात् । जगदर्थमासंसारं कुर्व्वन्तो भगवन्तस्तथागतास्तत्सुता अपि तिष्ठन्तु मां परिनिर्व्वान्तु इति । तदनु याचना, तादृशीं निरुत्तरां धर्म्मदेशनां भगवन्तस्तथागता देशयन्तु, यया झटित्येव संसारिणः सत्त्वा भवबन्धनान्निर्मुक्ता भवन्तीति । तदनन्तरं पुण्यपरिणामनां कुर्य्यात् । सप्तविधानुत्तरपूजापापदेशनाकुशलमूलमुपजातं तत् सर्व्वं सम्यक्सम्बोधये परिणामयामीति । अथवा समासतः सप्तविधानुत्तरपूजासूचकं श्लोमेनं पठेत्—

सर्व्वं पापमहं दिशामि परमं प्रीत्यानुमोदे शुभान्
आजन्मस्थितयेऽर्थये भगवतः सद्धर्म्मरत्नस्य च ।

रत्नानां त्रयमभ्युपैमि शरणं बोधौ दधे मानसं
तन्मार्गं च समाश्रये शुभविधीन् सम्बोधये नामये ॥

इत्यनेन सप्तविधानुत्तरपूजां विधाय ॐ मुः इति विसर्ज्जयेत् । अथवा—

शीलचन्दनलिप्ताङ्गा ध्यानप्रावरणावृताः ।
बोध्यङ्गकुसुमाकीर्णा विहरध्वं यथासुखम् ॥

इत्यनेन । तदनन्तरं चतुर्ब्रह्मविहारं मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षासंज्ञकं वक्ष्यमाणक्रमेण भावयेत् । तत्र केयं मैत्री ? सर्व्वसत्त्वेष्ठेकपुत्रप्रेमतालक्षणा, अथवा हितसुखोपसंहाराकारेति । करुणा पुनः कीदृशी ? दुःखाद् दुःखहेतोः समुद्धरणकामता, त्रिदुःखदुःखमहानलप्रज्वलितसंसारलोहभवनप्रविष्टान् जन्तून् ततोऽपि समुद्धरामीत्यध्याशयो वा करुणा, अथवा त्रिदुःखदुःखितानां सत्त्वानां संसाराम्बुधेः समुद्धरणेच्छा । मुदिता तु ईदृशी । प्रमोदो मुदिता, अथवाऽसदृशे बुद्धत्वे तदुपाये च सर्व्वं एव संसारिणः सत्त्वा मया प्रतिष्ठापयितव्या इत्यध्याशयो मुदिता, यद्वा विश्वेषां यानि कुशलानि तेषु तद्भोगैश्वर्य्यादिषु च आकृष्टचित्तता । कोपेक्षा ? प्रतिघानुनयनिबन्धनमपहाय हिताहितेषु जन्तुषु परमहिताचरणमुपेक्षा, यद्वा सर्व्वस्मिन् प्रेमानुशयरहितपरहितधर्म्मतायां स्वरसवाहिनी प्रवृत्तिरुपेक्षा, अथवा लाभालाभयशोऽपयशोनिन्दास्तुतिसुखदुःखेत्याद्यष्टलोकधर्म्मप्रमुखसकलाप्रस्तुतव्यापारोपेक्षणमुपेक्षा । चतुर्ब्रह्मविहारभावनानन्तरं सर्व्वधर्म्मप्रकृतिपरिशुद्धतां भावयेत् । सर्व्वं एव धर्म्माः प्रकृत्या स्वभावेन परिशुद्धा अहमपि प्रकृतिपरिशुद्ध इत्यादिकमामुखीकुर्य्यात् । इमां च सर्व्वधर्म्मप्रकृतिपरिशुद्धतामनेन मन्त्रेणाधितिष्ठेत् ॐ स्वभावशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्म्माः स्वभावशुद्धोऽहमिति । यदि प्रकृतिपरिशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्म्माः कुतस्तर्हि संसारमावहति ? ग्राह्यग्राहकादिमलावृतत्वात् । तद्विगमोपायः सन्मार्गभावना, तया स निरुद्ध. स्यात् । अतः प्रकृतिपरिशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्म्मा इति सिद्धम् । सर्व्वधर्म्मप्रकृतिपरिशुद्धतां विभाव्य सर्व्वधर्म्मशून्यतां विभावयेत् । तत्रेयं शून्यता । ग्राह्यग्राहकादिसकलकल्पनाप्रपञ्चवञ्चितचित्राद्वैतप्रकाशमात्रात्मकं सचराचरं विश्वमिति चिन्तयेत् । इमामेव शून्यतानेनपि मन्त्रेणाधितिष्ठेत् ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहमिति । तदनु पूर्व्वहृदिस्थमृगाङ्कमण्डलमध्यवर्त्तिसन्नीलोत्पलकिञ्जल्काभ्यन्तरस्थितनिष्कलङ्कनिशानाथमण्डलोपरिस्थितात् पीततांकारबीजाद् भगवतीमार्य्यतारामुत्तमश्यामवर्णां द्विभुजां प्रहसितवदनां निरुत्तराशेषगुणशालिनीं निःशेषदोषरहितां दिव्यसुवर्णमाणिक्य-

मुक्तारत्नाद्याभरणभूषितां मनोहारिहारावलीशतालङ्कृतकुचयुग्मां दिव्यकङ्कणकेयूरादिमण्डितबाहुद्वयां मेखलामलमणिगणकिरणावलीसुशोभितनितम्बभागां नानारत्नखचितरणन्नूपुरविशोभितचरणयुगलां पारिजातादिकुसुममञ्जरीपरिमलपरिकलितचारुनिबद्धकेशां भगवदमोघसिद्धितथागतरत्नविराजितशिरोदेशां अतिशयमूर्त्तिमतीं परमशृङ्गारोज्ज्वलविग्रहां अभिनवयौवनवतीं शरदमलनीलोत्पलनेत्रां दिव्यसर्व्वंपटाम्बरावृतशरीरां शकटचक्रप्रमाणसितकमलोपरिसितरश्मिमण्डलोपविष्टामर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कस्थितां दक्षिणकरेण वरदां वामेन विकचकान्तेन्दीवरं बिभ्रतीं निष्पाद्य चिन्तयेत् । एवंरूपां भगवतीं यावदिच्छति तावद् विभावयेत् ।

तदनन्तरमस्या एव भगवत्या हृदिस्थहिमांशुमण्डलमध्यावस्थितमञ्जुनीलसरोजकिञ्जल्कान्तर्गतकलङ्काङ्कवर्ज्जितकुमुदबान्धवमण्डलमध्यावलीनपीतताँकारबीजविनिर्गतानेकमरीचिमालाभिस्त्रैलोक्यालोककारिणीभिर्गत्वाऽनादिसंसिद्धा भगवती ज्ञानसत्त्वरूपाऽप्याकाशादानीयते । आनीय तामाकाशदेशेऽवस्थाप्य रत्नभाजनावस्थितसुगन्धितोयेन सुरभिकुसुमेन च तस्या एव भगवत्याश्चरणार्घं दत्त्वा दिव्यपुष्पधूपदीपनैवेद्यगन्धमाल्यविलेपनचूर्णचीवरछत्रध्वजघण्टापताकादिभिर्बाह्यगुह्यपूजाभिर्बहुविधाभिश्च तामेव भगवतीं पूजयेत् । पुनः पुनः सम्पूज्य स्तुत्वा च मुद्रां दर्शयेत् । सम्पुटाञ्जलिं कृत्वा मध्यमे सूचीं कुर्य्यात् । तयोः पर्व्वत्रयोपरि किञ्चित् सङ्कोच्य तर्ज्जन्यौ धारयेत् । अङ्गुष्ठौ समौ कृत्य तत्पर्व्वत्रयसमीपे स्थापयेत् । अनामिके करपुटे स्थाप्य कनिष्ठे प्रसार्य्य श्लिष्टीकृत्य दर्शयेदिति विकचोत्पलमुद्रेयम् । अनया मुद्रया तामेव भगवतीं ज्ञानसत्त्वरूपां सन्तोष्य अत्रैव समयसत्त्वरूपाया भगवत्या मन्त्रं भावयेदित्यनयोरद्वैतमधिमुञ्चेत् ।

तदनु निशीथिनीनाथमण्डलमध्यनिविष्ट विकचनीलाम्बुजकिञ्जल्कान्तर्लीननिष्कलङ्केन्दुमण्डलोपरिस्थितपीतताँकारबीजनिर्गताश्चापर्य्यन्ताश्च तारादेव्या दशदिग्लोकधातून् समवभास्य तत्स्थितानामपि सत्त्वानां नानारत्नवर्षणेन दारिद्र्यादिदुःखमपनयन्ति । क्षणिकनैरात्म्यादिधर्म्मदेशनामृतेन तान् सन्तर्पयन्ति । पुनः पुनर्नानाप्रकारं जगदर्थं कृत्वा विश्वमपि तारारूपं निष्पाद्य तत्रापि पीतताँकारबीजे ताश्चान्तर्भवन्तीत्येवमादिस्फुरणसंहरणक्रमेण यावत् खेदो न जायते तावद् भावयेत् । भावनातः खिन्नो मन्त्रं जपेत् । तत्रायं मन्त्रः ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा । महाप्रभाव एवायं मन्त्रराजः सर्व्वैरेव तथागतैर्वन्दितः पूजितः सत्कृतश्चेति ध्यानाद् व्युत्थितो जगत् तारारूपं दृष्ट्वा भगवत्यहङ्कारेण यथेष्टं विहरेदिति । प्रायोऽमुना क्रमेण भगवतीं भावयतोऽष्टमहासिद्धयश्चरणयोर्निपतन्ति, कि पुनरन्याः सिद्धयः ? अपि तु ताश्च सुतरामेव । यश्च विजनगिरिगुहासीनः सन् भगवतीं भावयेत् स खलु प्रत्यक्षत एव तां पश्यति । स्वयमेव भगवती तस्याः श्वासप्रश्वासादिकं ददाति । कि बहु वक्तव्यं, परमदुर्ल्लभं बुद्धत्वमपि करतलगतं तस्यावतिष्ठते ।

पुण्यं मया भगवतः खलु साधने यत्
प्राप्तं प्रकृष्टममलं विपुलं च तेन ।

तारे त्रिलोकविदिते वरसाधनं ते
कृत्वा जनो जिनपुरं त्वरितं प्रयातु ॥

तारायाः साधनं किञ्चिद्विस्तरं विरचय्य यत् ।
लब्धं तेन शुभं लोकः प्रयातु शमपत्तनम् ॥

॥ कृतिरियं पण्डितस्थविरानुपमरक्षितानाम् ॥

नम आर्य्याष्टमहाभयतारिण्यै ।

यस्याः स्मरणमात्रेण नष्टमष्टभयानकम् ।
तां प्रणम्य प्रवक्ष्यामि साधनं च शिशो शृणु ॥

ध्यात्वा गगनमध्ये तु तारामष्टभयापहाम् ।
पूजां मनोमयीं कृत्वा कुर्य्यात् पापस्य देशनाम् ॥

पुण्यानुमोदनां पश्चादात्मपुण्यस्य यातनाम् ।
आत्मभावं ततो दद्यात् शरणानि त्रिधा पुनः ॥

करोत्यकरणं पश्चात् शून्यतायास्त्वनन्तरम् ।
स्वहृच्चन्द्रे ततः पद्ममष्टदलविकाशिनम् ॥

तन्मध्ये ताँ विचिन्त्यैव नीलाभमुत्पलं ततः ।
तस्य मध्ये पुनर्बीजं वह्निरश्मिप्रभास्वरम् ॥

तेन देवी समुत्पाद्य सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ।
सव्यतो वरदां देवीं वामे तूत्पलकरां तथा ॥

एकवक्त्रां सुबिम्बां च नवयौवनसंस्थिताम् ।
सुगन्धिपुष्पकेशां च पद्मचन्द्रोपरिस्थिताम् ॥

अर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कमवष्टभ्य रक्षयेद् भुवनत्रयम् ।
अष्टदेव्यन्तराले च भावयेत् तारारूपिणीम् ।
स्फुरन्मन्त्रतया योगी कृत्वा ध्यानमनाविलः ॥

ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा । ॐ ॐ स्वाहा पूर्व्वे, ॐ ता स्वाहा दक्षिणे, ॐ रे स्वाहा पश्चिमे, ॐ तु स्वाहा उत्तरे, ॐ त्ता स्वाहा वह्निकोणे, ॐ रे स्वाहा नैर्ऋत्यां, ॐ तु स्वाहा वायव्ये, ॐ रे स्वाहा ऐशान्याम् ।

सर्व्वाः श्वेताः स्फुरद्रूपा यथा देवी तथा पराः ॥

ॐ ताँ तारिण्यै वज्रपुष्पं प्रतीच्छ स्वाहा पुष्पं देयम् । गन्धनैवेद्यादिकं उत्पलमुद्रया निवेदयेदिति ।

कृत्वा साधनमेवेदं नवदेवीसमन्वितम् ।
हत्वाऽष्टभयं च सर्व्वं करोतु जगदुत्तरम् ॥

॥ आर्य्याष्टमहाभयताराया: साधनम् ॥

पूर्व्वोक्तविधानेन शून्यताभावनानन्तरं रक्तआ:कारजरक्तपद्मोपरि सितटाँ कारजपद्मभाजने सूर्य्यंस्थनीलहुँकारजसबीजकर्त्तिपरिणामेन कृष्णामार्य्यंताराभट्टारिकां चतुर्भुजैकमुखीं त्रिनेत्रां खर्व्वंलम्बोदरां दंष्ट्राकरालवदनां प्रत्यालीढपदेन शवारूढां नागाष्टकभूषणां व्याघ्रचर्म्मवसनां अवलम्बमानमुण्डमालां पञ्चमुद्राविभूषितां खड्गकर्त्त्रिधारिदक्षिणकरामुत्पलकपालधारिवामकरां साक्षोभ्यनाथपिङ्गलजटाजूटां अतिघोराट्टहासभीमरूपां निष्पाद्य ॐ ह्रीँ हुँ फट् इति मन्त्रं विषयप्रज्ञाधिकारेण जपेत् ।

निरंशुमालिकां ध्यात्वा खड्गस्थाने विचक्षण: ।
स्फुरत्संहारयोगेन संजपेत् मन्त्रमुत्तमम् ॥

॥ महाचीनक्रमार्य्यंतारासाधनम् ॥

प्रत्यालीढपदार्पिताङ्घ्रिशवहृद्घोराट्टहासा परा
खड्गेन्दीवरकर्त्रिकार्पितभुजा हुँकारबीजोद्भवा ।

खर्व्वा नीलविशालपिङ्गलजटाजूटोग्रनागैर्युता
जाड्यं न्यस्य कपालके त्रिजगतां हन्त्युग्रतारा स्वयम् ।

महाचीनक्रमां नत्वा तारां त्रिभवतारिणीम् ।
तत्साधनमहं वक्ष्ये यथा गुरूपदेशत: ॥

एकलिङ्गे श्मशाने वा शून्यागारे च सर्व्वंदा ।
तत्रस्थ: साधयेद् योगी विद्यां त्रिभवमोक्षणीम् ॥

मृदुमसूरक समासीनोऽन्येषु कोमलेषु वा ।
विष्टरेषु समाश्रित्य साधयेत् सिद्धिमुत्तमाम् ॥

झटित्याकारयोगेन त्रिवज्रं सुसमाहित: ।
त्रिषु स्थानेषु तं ध्यात्वा रश्मिं विस्फारयेत् तत: ॥

त्रिभवचारिण: सत्त्वानवभास्यानयेत् पुन: ।
संहारे च पुनर्ध्यायाच्छून्यं विश्वं समन्तत: ॥

पठेत् जिनमन्त्रकं ॐ शून्यतादिस्वभावकम् ।
अन्तरीक्षं ततो ध्यायादा:काराद् रक्तपङ्कजम् ॥

भूयस्तस्योपरि ध्यायात् टाँकारात् पद्मभाजनम् ।
तस्य मध्ये पुनर्ध्यायात् हुँकारं नीलसन्निभम् ।।

ततो हुँकारजं पश्येत् कर्त्रिकां ढोऊभूषिताम् ।
कर्त्रिपरिणतं ध्यायादात्मानं तारिणीसमम् ।।

प्रत्यालीढपदां घोरां मुण्डमालाप्रलम्बिताम् ।
खर्व्वलम्बोदरां भीमां नीलनीरजराजिताम् ।।

त्र्यम्बकैकमुखां दिव्यां घोराट्टहासभासुराम् ।
सुप्रहृष्टां शवारूढां नागाष्टकविभूषिताम् ।।

रक्तवर्त्तुलनेत्रां च व्याघ्रचर्म्मावृतां कटौ ।
नवयौवनसम्पन्नां पञ्चमुद्राविभूषिताम् ।।

ललज्जिह्वां महाभीमां सदंष्ट्रोत्कटभीषणाम् ।
खड्गकर्त्रिकरां सव्ये वामोत्पलकपालधाम् ।।

पिङ्गोग्रैकजटां ध्यायात् मौलावक्षोभ्यभूषिताम् ।
भावनाचलनिष्पत्तौ भवेद् योगी महाकविः ।।

जडोऽपि यदि मूर्खः स्याद् भावनारसतत्परः ।
लभते मञ्जुवाणीं तु लक्षमन्त्रस्य जापतः ।।

त्र्यक्षरोऽसौ महामन्त्रः हुंकारान्तो हृदि स्थितः ।
पञ्चरश्मिसमायुक्तो अज्ञानेन्धनदाहकः ।।

तस्य द्वारविधिं वक्ष्ये योगाचारानुसारतः ।
प्रथमं हपरं दत्वा चतुर्थस्वरभूषितम् ।।

रेफारूढं स्फुरद्दीप्तमिन्दुबिन्दुसमन्वितम् ।
चँकारं च ततो दद्यात् चतुर्थेनैव भूषितम् ।।

दीर्घाकारसमायुक्तं हँकारं योजयेत् पुनः ।
हँकारं च ततो दद्यात् सम्पूर्णं सिद्धमन्त्रकम् ।।

निरंशुमालिकां ध्यात्वा खड्गस्थाने विचक्षणः ।
स्फुरत्संहारयोगेन संजपेत् मन्त्रमुत्तमम्।।

कल्पयेत् स्थिरचित्तेन पण्डितोऽहं महाकविः ।
अजस्रभावनाभ्यासाद् भवत्येव न संशयः ।।

तारायाः साधनं कृत्वा यन्मयोपचितं शुभम् ।
भवन्तु प्राणिनस्तेन पण्डिता जिनशासने ॥

कृतिः शाश्वतवज्रस्य सेयं मेधाप्रसाधनी ।
अगाधाः पण्डिता अत्र क्षन्तुमर्हन्ति साधवः ॥

॥ महाचीनक्रमतारासाधनं समाप्तम् ॥

नमः सिततारायै ।

पूर्व्ववच्छून्यतापर्य्यन्तं विभाव्य ।

सितारविन्दमध्यस्थां ताँभूतां चन्द्रविष्टराम् ।
आबद्धवज्रपर्य्यङ्कां वरदोत्पलधारिणीम् ॥

शरच्चन्द्रकराकारां पृष्ठचन्द्रसमाश्रिताम् ।
सर्व्वालङ्कारसम्पूर्णां षोडशाब्दवपुःक्रमाम् ॥

ध्यात्वाऽर्य्यतारां हृदये तस्याश्चक्रं सितद्युति ।
अष्टकोष्ठकमष्टाभिरक्षरैः परिपूरितम् ॥

ॐह्राव्यञ्जनमध्यस्थसाध्यनामाद्यनाभिकम् ।
ध्यायादेकाग्रचित्तः सन् षण्मासान् दृढनिश्चयः ॥

जपेदखिन्नचित्तः सन् मन्त्रमेनं दशाक्षरम् ॥

तत्रैव मन्त्रः ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा ।

मृत्युदोषैर्न्न लिप्तः स्यात् ताराहृच्चक्रभावकः ।
स्वामी च सर्व्वसिद्धीनां षण्मासावधि तत्परः ॥

॥ मृत्युवञ्चनतारासाधनम् ॥

मृत्युदोषैरलिप्तः स्यात् ताराहृच्चक्रभावकः ।
लाभी च सर्व्वसिद्धीनां षण्मासावधि तत्परः ॥

वागीश्वरकृतादेशात् मृत्युवञ्चनसंग्रहात् ।
उद्धृता सिततारायाः भावना भयनाशनी ॥

तुर्य्यवर्ग्गाद्यसाकारत्विषा विस्फुरिताऽम्बरे ।
सिताब्जेन्द्वासनां दृष्ट्वा पुरस्त्रिशरणं पठेत् ॥

मुहूर्त्तं शून्यतां पश्येत् प्राक्तुतारोपहानये ।
ततः प्रकृतिसामर्थ्याद् बोधिचित्ताक्षरं भवेत् ॥

सितारविन्दमध्यस्थचन्द्रबिम्बासनोपरि ।
आबद्धवज्रपर्य्यङ्कां वरदोत्पलधारिणीम् ॥

शरच्चन्द्रकराकारां पृष्ठचन्द्रसमाश्रिताम् ।
सर्व्वांलङ्कारसम्पूर्णा षोडशाब्दवपुष्मतीम् ॥

सर्व्वंसम्बुद्धतत्पुत्रमातरं कामरूपधाम् ।
ध्यात्वाऽऽर्य्यंतारां हृदये तस्याश्चक्रं सितद्युति ॥

अष्टकोष्कमष्टाभिरक्षरैः परिपूरितम् ।
ॐह्राव्यञ्जनमध्यस्थसाध्यनामाद्यनाभिकम् ॥

ध्यायादेकाग्रचित्तः सम् षण्मासान् दृढनिश्चयः ।
जपेदखिन्नचित्तः सन् मन्त्रमेनं दशाक्षरम् ॥

ॐकारमादितो दत्त्वा पश्चात् तारे प्रयोजयेत् ।
तुत्तारे स्यात् तुरे पश्चात् स्वाहान्तः सार्व्वकर्म्मिक ॥

ब्रह्मेन्द्रविष्णुचन्द्रार्करुद्रदिक्कालमन्मथैः ।
अप्यखण्डितरोमाग्रो मुत्युं जयति मुक्तवत् ॥

वलिपलितदौर्भाग्यव्याधिदारिद्यसंक्षयः ।
सिंहाद्यष्टमहाभीतिदु:खसन्दोहनाशनः ॥

अयाचिताम्बरपानान्नहर्म्यंरत्नादिसङ्गमः ।
खड्गाञ्जनपादलेपभद्रकुम्भादिसिद्धयः ॥

कविता वक्तृता मेधा प्रज्ञा चैकान्तनिर्मला ।
अन्या च वाञ्छिता सिद्धिञ्चक्रादस्मात् प्रजायते ॥

साधनं सिततारायाः मृत्युव्याधिविनाशनम् ।
उद्धृत्य यच्छुभं तेन जगत् तारा स्वयं भवेत् ॥

॥ मृत्युवञ्चनसिततारासाधनम् ॥

पूर्व्ववच्छून्यताद्यनन्तरं सुँकारपरिणतं नानारत्नमयं सुमेरुं तदुपरि पँकारेण श्वेतपद्मं तदुपरि अकारेण चन्द्रमण्डलं तन्मध्ये शुक्लहुँकारनिष्पन्नां ताराभगवतीं शुक्लां त्रिनेत्रां चतुर्भुजां पञ्चतथागतमुकुटीं नानालङ्कारां भुजद्वयेनोत्पलमुद्रां दधानां दक्षिणभुजेन चिन्तामणिरत्नसंयुक्तवरदां सर्व्वसत्त्वानामाशां परिपूरयन्तीं वामेनोत्पलमञ्जरीं बिभ्राणां ध्यायात्। तस्या दक्षिणपार्श्वे मारीचीं पीतां चन्द्रासनां नीलाम्बरां द्विभुजां वामेन रक्ताशोकपल्लवधरां दक्षिणेन सितचामरधरां रक्तकञ्चुकाभरणां वामपार्श्वे महामायूरीं प्रियङ्गुश्यामां द्विभुजां वामेन मयूरपिच्छधरां दक्षिणेन चामरधरां एवं विचिन्त्य ॐ भगवति तारे मम हृदये प्रविश स्वाहा इत्यात्मानमधितिष्ठेत्। ततो मन्त्रं जपेत्। ॐ नमस्तारे मनोहरे हुँ हरे स्वाहा।

॥ सिततारासाधनम् ॥

तथैव शून्यताभावनानन्तरं रेफपरिणतसूर्य्यस्थहुँभवविश्ववज्रपरिणतवज्रप्राकारादि विचिन्त्य तन्मध्ये पँकारजपद्मोपरि अकारजचन्द्रे सितहुँकारजं सबीजोत्पलं पश्येत्। तत्स्फुरणादिपूर्व्वकं तत्परिणतां भगवतीं सिततारां त्रिमुखां षड्भुजां पीतनीलदक्षिणेतरमुखीं प्रतिमुखं त्रिनेत्रां वरदाक्षसूत्रशरधरदक्षिणत्रिकरां उत्पलपद्मचापधरवामपाणित्रयां अर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णां चन्द्रासनप्रभां जटामुकुटस्थितामोघसिद्धि पञ्चमुण्डविभूषितमस्तकां अर्द्धचन्द्रकृतशेखरां नानालङ्कारधरां द्विरष्टवर्षाकृतिमष्टश्मशानमध्यस्थितां हृच्चन्द्रस्थितनिजबीजमात्मानं विचिन्त्य मन्त्रं जपेत् ॐ अचले अनिमित्तवरे हुँ हुँ फट् फट् स्वाहा। पोषधेन पूजापुरःसरं चतुःसन्ध्यायां मासैकं जपतः शान्तिकादि भवतीति।

॥ षड्भुजशुक्लतारासाधनम् ॥

॥ जाङ्गुलीतारायै नमः ॥

नत्वा भगवतीं तारां जाङ्गुलीरूपधारिणीम्।
सत्त्वानामनुकम्पार्थं लिख्यते तत्प्रसाधनम्॥

प्रथमं तावन्मन्त्री शुचिः स्नातः शुक्लमाल्याम्बरधरो विजने सुलिप्ते प्रदेशे शुक्लसुगन्धितोयोपसिक्ते शुक्लपुष्पप्रकरावकीर्णे सुखासनोपविष्टो जगति मैत्रीं करुणां च विभाव्य ॐ स्वभावशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्म्माः स्वभावशुद्धोऽहमित्युच्चारयेत्। ततः शून्यतामामुखीकृत्य चिन्तयेत् शुक्लपँकारजपद्मं शतपत्रं शुक्लं तदुपरि अकारजचन्द्रमण्डलोपरि शुक्लह्लीःकारं स्फुरदनेकरश्मिनिकरं तद्भूवां जाङ्गुलीं भगवतीं भावयेत् शुक्लवर्णां चतुर्भुजां जटामुकुटिनीं शुक्लां शुक्लोत्तरीयां सितरत्नालङ्कारवतीं शुक्लसर्पैर्भूषितां सत्त्वपर्य्यङ्कासनासीनां मूलभुजाभ्यां वीणां वादयन्तीं द्वितीयवामदक्षिणभुजाभ्यां सितसर्पाभयमुद्राधरां चन्द्रांशुमालिनीं ध्यायात्। शिरसि कण्ठे स्तनान्तरे नाभौ चन्द्रमण्डलस्थ-आः-ह्लीः-हुँकारान् विभावयेदाखेदं यावत्। तदनु मन्त्रं जपेत् ह्लीः। सप्तलक्षं जपेत्, सप्तायुतं जुहूयात् सितपुष्पं सितालङ्कारधरः सन्। ततो भवति गरुडेश्वरप्रभावः कविः सर्व्वशास्त्रविशारद इति।

॥ आर्य्यजाङ्गुलीतारासाधनम् ॥

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नमः आर्य्यतारायै ।

तारा हरितैकमुखी चतुर्भुजा द्विनयना स्तवतुष्टा ।
यस्या मण्डलचक्रे द्वादश देव्यो द्विनयनाश्च ॥

भगवत्यार्य्यताराया विशिष्टमतिदुर्ल्लभम् ।
प्रवक्ष्यामि समासेन धनदाक्रमसाधनम् ॥

प्रातः कृतबोधिचित्तोत्पादो योगी स्वहृच्चन्द्रे हरिततांकारं दृष्ट्वा कृतमुखशौचादिकः ॐ स्वभावशुद्धाः सर्व्वधर्माः स्वभावशुद्धोऽहमित्युच्चार्य्य ॐ अमृते हुँ फट् इत्यनेन नानाच्छटाभिर्दशदिग्विघ्नानुत्सार्य्य स्वहृदि पँकारजरक्तकमलोपरि अकारजचन्द्रस्थं स्वबीजं विभाव्य तत्किरणाकृष्टगगनस्थगुरुबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वान् सम्पूज्य पापदेशनादिकं विधाय शून्यतां च ध्यात्वाऽधिष्ठ्य च पुरतो रक्तरेफपरिणतसूर्य्यस्थकृष्णहुँकारजविश्ववज्रं विलोक्य तत्किरणवज्रैर्वज्रप्राकारं वज्रपञ्जरं वज्रभूमिं च ध्यायात् । अथ विश्ववज्रवेदिकायां रक्तपँकारजकमलोपरि अकारजचन्द्रस्थशुभ्रभ्रुँकारपरिणतं सितचक्रं भ्रुँकारमध्ये दृष्ट्वा पद्मचन्द्रे चक्रबीजपरिणामजं सर्व्वरत्नमयं चतुरस्रादिगुणयुक्तं द्विपुटं गर्भपुटस्थकमलाष्टदलकर्णिकासु नवचन्द्ररूपशोभितं चतुर्द्वारस्थचतुःसूर्य्यभासुरं कूटागारं पश्येत् । ततो मध्यचन्द्रोपरि तमेव तांकारम्, ततः स्फुरणसंहरणम्, ततस्तद्बीजां ताराभगवतीमात्मानं भावयेत् चन्द्रासनप्रभां सौम्यां सत्त्वपर्य्यङ्कस्थां हरितश्याममेकवदनां द्विलोचनां चतुर्भुजां अक्षसूत्रवरदोत्पलपुस्तकधरां विचित्रवस्त्रालङ्कारवतीम् । ततः ॐ शिरसि, ता ललाटे, रे चक्षुषोः, तु कण्ठे, त्ता बाह्वोः, रे हृदये, तु नाभौ, रे गुह्ये, स्वा जानुनोः, हा पादयोर्न्यस्येत् । ततो हृदये पद्मचन्द्रस्थस्वबीजरश्मिसञ्चोदितलोचनादिभिर्देवोभिरभिषिक्तमात्मानममोघसिद्धिमुकुटं ध्यायात् । अथवा पुटस्थचन्द्रेषु वज्रतारादिदेवीर्झटिति दृष्ट्वा पश्चाद् विभावयेत् । पूर्व्वे वज्रतारां कृष्णां वज्रहस्ताम्, दक्षिणे रत्नतारां पीतां रत्नहस्ताम पश्चिमे पद्मतारां रक्तकमलहस्ताम्, उत्तरे बुद्धतारां शुक्लां चक्रधारिणीम्, आग्नेयकोणे पुष्पतारां सितां पुष्पदामधराम्, नैऋत्यकोणे धूपतारां कृष्णां धूपकटच्छूहस्ताम्, वायव्यकोणे दीपतारां पीतां दीपयष्टिधराम्, ऐशानकोणे गन्धतारां रक्तां गन्धशङ्खधराम् । इमा विश्वपद्मपत्रस्थचन्द्रेष्वष्टौ शशिप्रभाः सत्त्वपर्य्यङ्कनिषण्णा वामेनोत्पलधारिकाः स्मेरवदना नानालङ्कारवस्त्रधारिण्यः । पूर्व्वद्वारे वज्राङ्कुशीं कृष्णां वज्राङ्कुशकराम्, दक्षिणे वज्रपाशीं पीतां वज्रपाशहस्ताम्, पश्चिमे वज्रस्फोटां रक्तां वज्रस्फोटधारिणीम्, उत्तरे वज्रघण्टां शुक्लां वज्रघण्टाहस्ताम् । एताश्चतुर्द्वारसूर्य्येषु पश्येत् सूर्य्यप्रभाः पिङ्गलोर्द्ध्वज्वलत्केशा आलीढपदस्थिता भुजङ्गभूषणा विकृतवदना व्याघ्रचर्म्माम्बरधरा वामकरेणोत्पलधारिकाः । ततो ज्ञानसत्त्वेन सहैकीकृत्य स्वहृत्कमलगतस्वबीजमतिसूक्ष्मं भावयेत् निश्चलेन मनसा । ततो मन्त्रं जपेत् ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे धनं मे दद स्वाहा । तत उत्थानसमये ॐ अकारो मुखमित्यादिना मन्त्रेणोत्पलमुद्रया बलिं दत्त्वा प्रणिधिं विधाय देवताचक्रं स्वबीजे अन्तर्भाव्य स्वदेवताहङ्कारमुद्वहनं यथासुखं विहरेत् । मध्याह्नसायाह्नसन्ध्ययोस्तु स्वहृद्बीजात् झटिति देवताचक्रं संस्फार्य्य पूर्व्ववद् ध्यानजपादिकं कुर्य्यात् । सायाह्नमध्याह्नसन्ध्यायां पुनरयं विशेषः । पुष्पादिना ज्ञानमण्डलं सम्पूज्य ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे मुरित्यनेन विसर्जयेदिति ।

॥ धनदतारासाधनम् ॥

नमो रत्नत्रयाय ।

नमः आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय नमस्तारायै, तद्यथा, ॐ तारे तारय हुँ हुँ हुँ समयस्थिते भर सर्व्वाभरणभूषिते पद्मे पद्मे पद्मभुजे पद्मासनस्थे हस हस त्रैलोक्यवरदे सर्व्वदेवदानवपूजिते स्मराहि भगवत्तथागतपुरतः समयं धर धर महासत्त्वावलोकिते मणिकनकविचित्राभरणे ॐ विलोकय भगवति तारे हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् स्वाहा । मूलमन्त्रः सधातुके चैत्ये अष्टोत्तरसहस्रं जपेत् । ततो हि पूर्णे सति भगवतीमार्य्यतारां पश्यति, यमिच्छति तं वरं लभते । ॐ मणितारे हुँ लक्षजापेनार्य्या अग्रज उपतिष्ठति, यदिच्छति तत् सर्व्वं ददाति । विना मण्डलकस्नानोपवासेन केवलं जापमात्रेण सिध्यति । सर्व्वकार्य्यं च साधयति ।

॥ भगवत्यार्य्यतारायाः कल्पोद्देशः समाप्तः ॥

नमस्तारायै ।

स्रग्भाजो भगवत्यास्तारायाः कतिपयोपचारोऽयम् ।
सर्व्वाज्ञानविनाशनहेतोस्तज्ज्ञैस्सदा कार्य्यः ॥

स्थाने शुचौ मनोज्ञे स्नातो मन्त्राम्बुयोगतः स्थित्वा ।
पूजोपचारयुक्ते तदभावे भाविते वापि ॥

पूर्व्वाभिमुखो योगी परहितमनसा विभावितां देवीम् ।
अर्ज्जुनमीरजचन्द्रे स्थानमुपेतामनेकगुणबहुलाम् ॥

शरदिन्दुधामधवलीं नवयौवनमण्डिताङ्गलक्ष्मीकाम् ।
नीलोत्पलदलनयनां सीमान्ते भक्तनागसम्भूताम् ॥

कुण्डलरुचकाङ्गदकैः रसनामञ्जीरघुर्घुरासहितैः ।
संशोभिगात्रयष्टिं मुक्ताफलमाल्यचारुकुचयुग्माम् ॥

मण्डितदुकूलवसनां कर्णोत्पलहारिचापवद्धूकाम् ।
चिन्तावचनविलोकनहृत्पापां सर्व्वसत्त्वानाम् ॥

रत्नांशुजालबहलितजाम्बूनदपट्टशोभिमूर्द्धानम् ।
अमिताभबुद्धमध्यां जटिकां दधतीं मनोहरामेवम् ॥

या भगवती सोऽहं योऽहं सा भगवतीत्यहङ्कारमुत्पादयेत् । सर्व्वत्र पूजाविधानस्य मन्त्राधिष्ठानमार्य्यकर्म्मकेन मन्त्रनीतिप्रयोगेन न कर्त्तव्यम् । एतच्च त्रिसन्ध्यं सर्व्वदा च नित्यस्नातेन गृहीत-

ब्रह्मचर्य्येण त्रिचेलपरिवर्त्तनतत्परेण दशकुशलकर्म्मपरिहारवता सर्व्वाकुशलपक्षकर्म्मपरिक्षयायोद्यतेन मनसा साधकेन तावदविरतं भावयितव्यं यावदसौ भगवती स्वयं न भवति। अत्र चोपदेशो हार्द्दतमोजालपटलविघटनापकरणीयः । तद्यथाऽलिगुप्तमध्यहरिणाङ्कवलयोपरि मायाबीजं स्रवत्सुधाधारिणं शुद्धार्क्कसन्निभं तदधो वातमण्डलीस्थाने तत्त्वबीजसूर्य्यकोटिसमप्रभं देदीप्यमानं सर्व्वमोहान्धकारं दशदिग्गतमामूलं शोधयन्तं मूर्द्धबीजक्षरितामृतधाराभिः प्लवमानं स्थिरमना दीर्घं भावयेत्। खिन्नश्च ततो जिह्वारुणाम्बुजदले गुरूपदेशतो बीजं ध्यात्वा ततो मन्त्रमालां निश्चरन्तीं मणिमन्त्रौषधिबलं तथागतज्ञानामृतं चाकृष्य जठरकूपे प्रविश्य तान्यधो व्याप्य पुनरुद्वहन्तीं निरीक्षमाणो योगी मन्त्रं जपेत्। यद्येवमयं करोति तदाऽस्य सपद्यनुभवो महान् भवति, एवमेव यदि सप्ताहोरात्रान् करोति दृढध्यानस्तदा महाप्राज्ञो वाग्मी पटुः पद्यमुखभाषो गणज्ञोऽविरतवाक्यगद्यपद्यं करोति। संस्कृतान्ययत्नतो वक्तुमलं भवति, नात्र विकल्पः करणीय इति।

अथ स्तुतिविधानमभिधीयते। योऽभूत् महापण्डितः श्रीसर्व्वज्ञमित्रनामा भगवतीताराचरणेनाविष्टमानसः काश्मीरकविबुधजनचक्रवर्त्तितिलकस्तेन वक्त्रातोऽपि सङ्कटगतेन तामेव भगवतीमार्य्यतारामाराध्य मरणाभिलाषपरायणेन मनसा कृतोर्द्धदृष्टिना कृतकरपुटाञ्जलिना नवनुतिकुसुममालया दरिद्रस्य मम मन्दकर्म्मणः स्रग्धरा भव मातः परस्मिन्नपि जन्मनि भगवतीचरणकमललाभी भवेयमिति कृतप्रणिधिना भगवत्यभिष्कृता तेन स्रग्धरेति नाम उपपन्नम्। स्रग्धरानाम्ना च वृत्तेन रचितत्वादस्याः स्तुतेः स्रग्धरेति नाम समुदितम्, तन्नाम्ना भगवत्याः स्तुतित्वाद् वा, उभयथाऽपि वा तन्नामानयोरुत्पन्नमिति वार्त्ता।

इह हि प्रज्ञापारमितां साक्षादधिगन्तुकामो योगी विद्याधरोऽर्धमासं कालत्रयं पूर्व्वोक्तविधानसमापन्नः पूर्व्वोक्तसकलव्रताचारानुपालक एकमना विजने भगवतीं स्तूयादजस्रमविच्छिन्नम्। तत्र चोपदेशः पठनवेलायामुच्चारणमातरिमूलावलग्राग्रेषु यथाक्रमं तत्त्वबीजशक्तिबीजमायाबीजानि विन्यस्य भगवतिविदा कालत्रयोच्छलितरश्मिसुस्नातः सन्नहमिति—

कृत्वा विधिमतियुक्तं तारायाः स्रग्धराया यत् कुशलम्।
तेन समस्तं भूयाज्जगदाशु तारिणीसदृशम्॥

॥ स्रग्धरायाः स्तुतिविधिः समाप्ता ॥

प्रणम्य तारिणीं भक्त्या सर्व्वसम्पत्तिवर्द्धनीम्।
लिख्यते साधनं तस्या यथाम्नायं समासतः॥

प्रथमं तावत् योगी सुरभिगन्धपुष्पादिमनोहरध्यानागारादिकं प्रविश्य सुखासने पर्य्यङ्कं बद्धा स्वहृदये अकारपरिणतं चन्द्रमण्डलं तस्योपरि पीतताँकारबीजं तत्किरणाकृष्टमभिमुखमाकाशदेशे भगवतीचक्रमवलोक्य स्वहृद्बीजनिःसृतपुष्पादिदेवीः संस्फार्य्य पुष्पादिभिः पूजां विदध्यात्। ततस्तस्यैव

भगवतीचक्रस्याग्रतः पापदेशनादिकं कुर्य्यात्। सर्व्वंमात्मनः पापं प्रतिदेशयामि, सर्व्वंबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वार्य्यपृथग्जनानां सर्व्वंकुशलमनुमोदे सर्व्वं चात्मनः कुशलमनुत्तरायां सम्यक्सम्बोधौ परिणामयामि, एषोऽहमाबोधेर्बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि द्विपदानामग्र्यम्, धर्म्मं शरणं गच्छामि समग्रं महायानम्, सङ्घं शरणं गच्छामि अवैवर्त्तिकबोधिसत्त्वगणम्, अहो बताहमनुत्तरां सम्यक्संबोधिमभिसंबुद्धेयं सर्व्वं सर्व्वंसत्त्वानामर्थाय हिताय सुखाय यावदत्यन्तनिष्ठे निर्व्वाणधातौ बुद्धबोधौ प्रतिष्ठापनाय च, एषोऽहमनुत्तरसम्यक्संबोधिमार्गमाश्रयामि यदुत वज्रयानम्। ततस्त्रिशरणगाथां पठेत्। ततः सर्व्वंसत्त्वेषु सुखोपसंहाराकारां मैत्रीम्, सर्व्वंदुःखापनयनाकारां करुणाम्, दिव्यसुखावियोगनियमाकारां मुदिताम्, क्लेशप्रतिपक्षमार्गोपसंहाराकारां उपेक्षां भावयेत्।

ततः सर्व्वंधर्म्मान् मनसाऽवलम्ब्य विचारयेत्। चित्तमेवैतत् तेन तेनाकारेण भ्रान्तं प्रतिभासते। यथा स्वप्ने नास्ति चित्तात् बाह्यचित्तं बाह्यग्राह्याभावात् चित्तमपि ग्राहकं भवति। तस्माच्चित्तशरीराः सर्व्वंधर्म्माः तेषां ग्राह्यग्राहकशून्यता परमार्थं इत्येवमेकान्तेन निश्चित्य भ्रान्तिसमारोपितं भ्रान्तिचिह्नं सर्व्वंधर्म्माणामाकारमपहाय तेषां प्रकृतिमेव केवलामद्वयविज्ञप्तिलक्षणां शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशां शरदमलमध्याह्नगगनोपमामनन्तां पश्येत्। इदमुच्यते लोकोत्तरं शून्यताज्ञानं निष्प्रपञ्चं निर्विकल्पम्। ततस्तन्मन्त्रेणाधितिष्ठेत् ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहम्। सैव भगवती प्रज्ञापारमिता सैव परमा रक्षा। ततस्तस्य निष्यन्दभूतामाकारवतीं रक्षां शुद्धलौकिकज्ञानस्वभावां भावयेत्। ततो रेफेण सूर्य्यं पुरतो विभाव्य तस्मिन् रवौ हुँभवं विश्ववज्रं तेनैव वज्रेण विभावयेच्च प्राकारकं वज्रपञ्जरबन्धनं च विश्ववज्रकिरणैः प्रलयानलदुःसहैः सर्व्वंतः स्फुरित्वा घनीभूय रचितं तिर्य्यक् चतुरस्रं ज्वलद्वज्रप्राकारं उपरिष्टाच्च वज्रपञ्जरमधस्तात् वज्रमयीं भूमिमारसातलविरचितां पश्येत्। ततो रविविश्ववज्राभ्यां रश्मीभूय दशदिशि स्फुरित्वा घनीभूय बहिर्द्वारि सीमाबन्धः कार्य्यं इति श्लोकार्थः। तन्मध्ये आकाशमहाभूतस्वभावं धर्म्मोदयाख्यं महावज्रधरस्वभावं शरच्छशधरधवलमधः सूक्ष्मं उपरि विशालं त्रिकोणं अन्तर्गगनस्वरूपं तन्मध्ये विश्वदलकमलकर्णिकावस्थितविपुलविश्ववज्रं तद्वेदिकायां चत्वारि महाभूतानि चतुर्मण्डलाकाराणि चतुर्द्देवीस्वभावानि उपर्य्युपरि पश्येत्। तत्रादौ यँकारेण वायव्यं धन्वाकारं धूमवर्णं कोटिद्वये चलत्पताकाङ्कम्, ततो रँकारेणाग्नेयं त्रिकोणं रक्तकोणेषु रेफाङ्कम्, ततो वँकारेण वारुणं वर्त्तुलं सितघटाङ्कम्, ततो लँकारेण माहेन्द्रमण्डलं चतुरस्रं पीतं कोणेषु त्रिसूचिकवज्राङ्कम्, तदुपरि भ्रुँकारजं चक्रं भावकत्त्विदानीं तदेव लोकोत्तरं ज्ञानं व्यापकत्वेन स्थितं ततो विश्ववज्रं वेदिकामध्ये चतुर्म्महाभूतपरिणामजं परिशुद्धबुद्धक्षेत्रं संक्षेपरूपं महामोक्षपुरं वैरोचनस्वभावं नानारत्नमयं कूटागारम्—

चतुरस्रं चतुर्द्वारं अष्टस्तम्भोपशोभितम्।
चतुर्वेदीपरिक्षिप्तं चतुस्तोरणमण्डितम्॥

हारार्द्धहारपट्टस्रग्वितानादर्शचामरै रुचिरवज्रसूत्रैश्च स्फुरद्बुद्धबोधिमंशुभिः चलच्चित्रपताकाग्रघण्टामुखरदिङ्मुखं परमैः पञ्चकामोपहारैश्च हर्षणं द्विपुटं किञ्जल्केन भावयेदेकं त्रिकोणेनापरं

स्मृतम् । तन्मध्ये द्विगुणालिपरिणतं चन्द्रं तदुपरि ताँकारपरिणतं वज्रं तद्वरटके ताँकारं ततोऽपि द्विगुणोपेतडढदधयलोपेतद्विगुणकालिपरिणतं सूर्य्यं द्वयोर्म्मेला महासुखं परमानन्दम् ।

आदर्शज्ञानवांश्चन्द्रः स तावान् सप्तसप्तिकः ।
बीजैश्चिह्नैः स्वदेव्याश्च प्रत्यवेक्षणमुच्यते ।
सर्व्वैरैक्यानुष्ठानं निष्पत्तिः शुद्धधर्म्मता ॥

इति पञ्चाकाराभिः सम्बोधिः । तद्बीजरश्मिभिः सत्त्वानाकृष्य स्वेष्टदेवताचक्रं तथैव प्रवेश्य च योगी चिह्नबीजपरिणतां तारादेवीं विभावयेत्—

अष्टबाहुं चतुर्वक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ।
कनकवर्णनिभां भव्यां कुमारीलक्षणोज्ज्वलाम् ॥

चतुर्बुद्धमहामुकुटीं वज्रसूर्य्याभिषेकजाम् ।
नवयौवनलावण्यां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ॥

विश्वपद्मसमासीनां रक्तप्रभाविभूषिताम् ।
वज्रपाशं तथा शङ्खं सच्छरोद्यतदक्षिणाम् ॥

वज्राङ्कुशोत्पलं चैव वामे कार्मुकतर्ज्जनीम् ।
वज्रतारात्मको योगी सर्व्वसत्त्वार्थपारगः ॥

वज्रपर्य्यङ्कयोगेन साधयेद् भुवनत्रयम् ।
पूर्व्वेण पुष्पतारां तु सितवर्णां मनोरमाम् ॥

ॐकारज्ञाननिष्पन्नां पुष्पदामकराकुलाम् ।
द्विभुजामेकवक्त्रां च सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

दक्षिणे धूपतारां तु कृष्णवर्णां सुरूपिणीम् ।
धूपशाखाकरव्यग्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥

पश्चिमे दीपतारां च दीपयष्टिकराकुलाम् ।
पीतवर्णां महाभूषां चलत्कनककुण्डलाम् ॥

उत्तरे गन्धतारां तु गन्धशङ्खकराकुलाम् ।
रक्तवर्णनिभां देवीं भावयेद् गर्भमण्डले ॥

द्वारपालीस्ततो ध्यायात् अङ्कुश्यादिप्रभेदतः ।
अङ्कुशं दक्षिणे हस्ते वामेन दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ।
सूर्य्यमण्डलमध्यस्थां शुक्लवर्णां मनोरमाम् ॥

अङ्कुशी ।

पाशदक्षिणहस्ते तु वामेन दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ।
रक्तमण्डलमध्यस्थां गौररूपां मनोरमाम् ॥

पाशिनी ।

दक्षिणे तु करे स्फोटां वामहस्तेन तर्ज्जनीम् ।
वज्रमण्डलमध्यस्थां रक्तवर्णां विभावयेत् ॥

वज्रस्फोटा ।

वज्रघण्टाकरव्यग्रां वामेन दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ।
रश्मिमण्डलमध्यस्थां रक्तोत्पलसन्निभाम् ॥

वज्रघण्टा ।

कोणभागेषु चिह्नानि चत्वारि विधियोगतः ।
बोधिचित्तघटो मेरुर्वह्निकुण्डं महाध्वजः ॥

ऊर्द्धे चोष्णीषविजयां शुक्लवर्णां सुरूपिणीम् ।
वज्रं दक्षिणहस्ते च वामेन दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ॥

नागपाशं दक्षिणे हस्ते वामेन दुष्टतर्ज्जनीम् ।
कृष्णवर्णां महाघोरामधः सुम्भां विभावयेत् ॥

ततो ध्यात्वा मन्त्रं स्फुरनं जपेत् ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा ।

दशाक्षरैर्दश देवत्यो दशपारमिताश्रयाः ।
भावनीयाः प्रयोगेन सर्व्वकर्म्मप्रसिद्धये ॥

मोहवज्रां न्यसेन्नेत्रे द्वेषवज्र्यां च कर्णतः ।
ईर्ष्यावज्रां तथा घ्राणे वक्त्रे तु रागवज्रिकाम् ॥

स्पर्शे मात्सर्य्यवज्रां वै सर्व्वक्लेशतमोऽपहाम् ।
आयतनेषु विज्ञेया हृद्या नैरात्म्ययोगिनी ॥

द्विभुजाश्चैकवक्त्राः स्युर्नानारूपा हि योषितः ।
कर्त्रिकपालकरव्यग्रा गतप्राणोर्द्धसंस्थिताः ॥

ततः कायवाक्चित्ताधिष्ठानम् ।

ॐकारोऽयं महावज्रो कायवज्रविभूषणः ।
हुँकारः । चित्तवज्रो मोहवज्रो वज्रसत्त्वपदे स्थितः ॥

आःकारं परमं तत्त्वं बाह्यं चोद्घाटकं मतम् ।
सर्व्वासामेव मातॄणां हृदि ज्ञानमयं न्यसेत् ॥

सत्त्वज्ञानप्रयोगेन बुद्धबोधिमवाप्नुयात् ।
स्वमन्त्राक्षरसम्भूता मुद्राचिह्नस्य कल्पना ॥

स्फुरणं संहरणं कृत्वा माण्डलेयानां तु सम्भवः ।
आकाशधातुमध्यस्थं भावयेद् ज्ञानमण्डलम् ॥

पञ्चज्ञानगुणाकीर्णं नानारूपं समन्ततः ।
पूजयेत् सर्व्वपूजाभिर्मानयेच्च न हापयेत् ॥

द्वारपालीप्रयोगेन ज्ञानोदधिं प्रसाधयेत् ।
समयचक्रे समावेश्य ज्ञानचक्रं महोज्ज्वलम् ।
सर्व्वबुद्धसमो योगी अद्वयी भवति क्षणात् ॥

ॐ वज्राङ्कुशी आकर्षय जः, ॐ वज्रपाशी प्रवेशय हुँ, ॐ वज्रस्फोट बन्धय वँ, ॐ वज्रावेशे वशीकुरु होः । स्वहृद्बीजनिःसृतरश्मिभिरङ्कुशाकारैस्त्रैधातुकस्थितान् बुद्धानाकृष्याष्टमातृभिः संपूज्यानुनाथ्यते । अभिषिञ्चन्तु मां सर्व्वतथागताः—

बोधिवज्रेण बुद्धानां यथा दत्तो महामहः ।
ममापि त्राणनार्थाय खवज्राद्यं ददाहि मे ॥

अभिषेकं महावज्रं त्रैधातुकनमस्कृतम् ।
ददामि सर्व्वबुद्धानां त्रिगुह्यालयसम्भवम् ॥

इति पठद्भिर्बुद्धैर्हेरुकरूपैः पञ्चामृतभृतपञ्चतथागतात्मकैः कलशैः पञ्चभिरभिषिष्यते । अभिषिच्यमाने पुष्पवृष्टिर्भवति, दुन्दुभिशब्दश्चोच्छलति, कुङ्कुमवृष्टिर्भवति, रूपवज्रादिभिः पूज्यते, वज्र-

गीत्या लोचनादिभिः स्तूयते, अभिषिच्यमाने मूर्द्ध्नि वज्रसूर्य्यं उत्पद्यते। मुकुटस्य चतुर्द्दिक्षु वैरोचनाक्षोभ्यामिताभामोघसिद्धयस्तथागता मध्यपुटचतुर्देवीनां मुकुटेऽपि यथाक्रमं द्वारपालीनामपि, उष्णीषाया रत्नेशः, सुम्भाया मुकुटे अक्षोभ्यः।

द्वेषवज्रि नमस्तुभ्यं मोहवज्रि नमोऽस्तु ते।
मात्सर्य्यवज्रि मां त्राहि रागवज्रि प्रयच्छ मे॥

महामाने महेर्ष्येति सर्व्ववज्रि प्रसीद मे।
सर्व्ववज्रसमयनाथा सर्व्वकर्म्मप्रसाधिका॥

इमे पुष्पाः शुभा दिव्याः शुचयः शुचियोनयः।
मया निवेदिता भक्त्या प्रतिगृह्य प्रसीद मे॥

पुष्पम्।

वनस्पतिरसो हृद्यो गन्धाढ्यो धूप उत्तमः।
मया निवेदितो भक्त्या प्रतिगृह्य प्रसीद मे॥

धूपः।

रक्षोघ्नश्च पवित्रश्च तमोभिदः मनःशुभः।
मया निवेदितो भक्त्या प्रतिगृह्य प्रसीद मे॥

दीपः।

इमे गन्धाः शुभा दिव्याः शुचयः शुचियोनयः।
मया निवेदिता भक्त्या प्रतिगृह्य प्रसीद मे॥ गन्धः।

तदनु नीलपँकारपरिणतधन्वाभध्वजाङ्कितवायुमण्डले रक्तरँबीजसम्भूतत्रिकोणाग्नेयमण्डलोपरि रक्तआःकारसम्भूतपद्मभाण्डे वुँ-आँ-जोँ-खँ-हुँ-बीजपरिणतं तद्बीजाधिष्ठितगन्धार्कचन्द्रभैषज्यवारिलक्षणं यथाऽसंख्येयं पञ्चतथागतस्वभावं पञ्चामृतं गोकुटदहनाख्यं च पञ्चबीजं ध्यात्वा तदुपरि वितस्तिमात्रमतिक्रम्य चन्द्रस्थहुँकारसम्भूतशुक्लपञ्चसूचिकमहावज्रं ध्यात्वा तदध ॐकारं विचिन्त्य वायुप्रेरिताग्नेयमण्डलाग्निना उपरि वज्राग्निना च तत् सर्व्वं परिणतं दृष्ट्वा तद्बाष्पस्पर्शेन प्रणवं वज्रविलीनं तस्मिन्नेवामृते नवनीतवत् समरसीभूतं ध्यात्वा तदुपरि शुक्लताँकाररश्मिभिस्त्रैलोक्योदरवर्त्तिसर्व्वामृतमाकृष्य तत्रान्तर्भाव्य धर्म्मधातुसमतया सर्व्वतथागतहृदयवर्त्तिज्ञानामृतमाकृष्य तैरेव सहैकीकृत्य

तदुपरि त्रितत्त्वं ध्यात्वा तेनैवाभिमन्त्र्य सर्व्वंमाण्डलेयहृदये मण्डलचक्रं ध्यात्वा तज्जिह्वासु शुक्लहुँकारजं यवफलप्रमाणं शुक्लवज्रं ध्यात्वा तेन पञ्चामृतेन माण्डलेयानात्मानं च सन्तर्प्पयेदिति। एतेन मण्डलं निष्पन्नं त्रिसन्ध्यं भावनां कृत्वा तिष्ठेत्। सततं देवतामूर्त्या स्थातव्यम्। तत्रायं जपमन्त्रः ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा।

एतन्मन्त्रवरं श्रेष्ठं सर्व्वंबुद्धैर्नमस्कृतम्।
पठितसिद्धिकरं तीव्रं वज्रपञ्जरभाषितम्॥

अथापरोऽपि धारिणीमन्त्रः, नम आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय, तद्यथा, ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वंदुष्टप्रदुष्टान् मम कृते जम्भय स्तम्भय मोहय बन्धय हुँ हुँ हुँ फट् फट् फट् सर्व्वंदुष्टस्तम्भनि तारे स्वाहा।

दशाक्षरस्य विधानम्—अनेन मन्त्रेण पटाञ्चलं सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा ग्रन्थिं बद्धा विन्ध्यायामपि गच्छन् न केनाप्यवलोयते। व्याघ्रचौरनर्क्रसिंहसर्पदन्तिमहिषभल्लक् गवयादयो नामस्मरणमात्रेण नश्यन्ति विलीयन्ते।

अनेन मन्त्रेण उत्पलानामष्टोत्तरशतं यावत् जुहूयात्। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकं मे वशमानय स्वाहा। पुनस्तेनैव मन्त्रेण काकपक्षं द्वात्रिंशद्वारान् परिजप्यारिगृहे गोपयेत् सप्ताहेन चाटयति। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे चल प्रचल शीघ्रगामिनि देवदत्तमुच्चाटय हुँ फट्।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां कुमारीं मह्यमुद्वाह्येन तस्याः पिता प्रयच्छतु स्वाहा।

मदनं चण्डबीजं च तथोन्मत्तकमेव च।
अशोकपत्रं पुष्पं च जुहूयात् पञ्चसहस्रकम्॥

घृतमधुगुडहोमं कन्यासिद्धौ प्रशस्यते।
सप्ताहेन तदा योगी लभेत् कन्यां स्ववाञ्छिताम्॥

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकाभिधानां स्वस्थानादाकर्षय समान्तिके जः। अनेन मन्त्रेण बदरकण्टकानां पञ्चसहस्राणि स्वयम्भूकुसुमाक्तानि होतव्यानि। अनेन कृतेन नृपाणामपि कन्यामाकर्षयति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। रजःस्वलाकर्प्पटे भगवतीं द्विभुजामेकवदनामङ्कुशोत्पलपाशहस्तां विलिख्य तस्याः पुरतः पूजां कृत्वा इमे पुष्पाः शुभा दिव्या इत्यादिना पूजयेत्। पश्चान्मन्त्रं जपेत् भावनान्वितः ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकीं कन्यां ममेप्सितं स्वप्नं कर्णे कथय हुँ फट्। पञ्चसहस्रेणागच्छति। पाशेन गलके बद्धा अङ्कुशेन हृदि विदार्य्य च साध्यां पादतले ध्यात्वा दासीरूपेण भुञ्जयेत्।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ताराधारणीं सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा आत्मनोऽक्षिद्वयं अञ्जयेत्। राजकुलं प्रविशतः स राजा शिष्यवद् गौरवं करोति, विरुद्धं न वक्ति, प्रसादं च प्रयच्छति, प्रियालापं च कुरुते, दासतां समुपैति, क्रुद्धोऽपि वशो भवेदिति दृष्टप्रत्ययश्च सद्भूतः।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ताराधारणीं शतधाऽऽवर्त्य द्विवदनाशीविषं भस्म कृत्वा रक्तवर्णगोघृतेनार्कदलेन वर्त्ति कृत्वा प्रज्वाल्य कज्जलं पातयेत्। तत् कज्जलं वज्रसूर्य्यवज्रधर्म्माभ्यां सम्मर्द्य परमान्नेन धूपयेत्। भस्मना सार्द्धमक्षि अञ्जयेत्। यां पश्यति चक्षुर्वज्रेण सा यदि पद्मनर्त्तेश्वरं न रक्षति तदाहं तारा न भवेयम्, घातिताश्च मया बुद्धा भगवन्तो भवेयुरिति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। अदशनशिशुलोलां गृहीत्वा ताराधारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा भृङ्गराजमूलं गोरोचनया सार्द्धमेकीकृत्य ललाटे तिलकं परिधाय यां यां पश्यति, तां तां वशं कुरुते।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। उदरकीटं ताराधारण्या सप्ताभिमन्त्रितं कृत्वा वज्रधर्म्मेण सार्द्धं कन्यायै ताम्बूलेन सह दद्यात्। अभ्यवहृतमात्रेण योगवरेण न मुञ्चति, नान्यं रमते, नान्यस्मिन् गच्छति, नान्यं पुरुषमिच्छति, स्वर्पति त्यजति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। महातैलेनात्मानमभ्यङ्ग्य ताराधारणीं जपेत्। अमितं जपेद् भावयेच्च। जपान्ते शालिपिष्टकेन कुड्मलया शष्कुलिकां कृत्वा यस्यै यस्मै वा दीयते सा स पञ्चत्वं गता गतोऽपि न मुञ्चेदिति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। चन्द्रोपरागसमये ताराधारणीं जपमानः सेवां कृत्वा ततः समुद्भूतं लोकेश्वरं संगृह्य शङ्खचूर्णेन भावयेत्। ततः प्रमदायै दातव्यम्, पच्चतां यावदनुवर्त्तते तमेव परमिच्छति नान्यम्।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ताराधारणीमन्त्रेण मदनफलमष्टोत्तरशतवारं परिजप्य तेन मदनफलेन हयग्रीवेण सार्द्धं यां स्रक्षयति सा वश्या भवति।

अथापरोऽपि प्रयोगो भवति। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे अमुकस्य बन्धनमुक्तिं कुरु मुः स्वाहा इत्यनेन मन्त्रेण अर्कदले साध्यनामविदर्भितं लिखित्वा कुलीरगर्त्ते गोपयेत्। तस्यावश्यं बन्धनमुक्तिर्भवति।

साधनं वज्रतारायाः संलिख्य यदुपार्ज्जितम्।
तेन पुण्येन लोकोऽयं व्रजतां सौगतीं गतिम्॥

॥ वज्रतारासाधनं समाप्तम्॥

॥ कृतिरियं रत्नाकरशान्तिपावानाम्॥

संपूज्य देवीं करवीरपुष्पैरष्टौ शतान्येव जपेत् त्रिसन्ध्यम् ।
इष्टं वरं याचितमेकमेव मासेन दद्याद् ध्रुवमार्य्यतारा ॥

ॐ जम्भे मोहे स्वाहा, नमस्तारायै, नम आर्य्यावलोकितेश्वराय बोधिसत्त्वाय महासत्त्वाय महाकारुणिकाय, नमो भगवत्यै आर्य्यतारायै, ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे वीरे दुर्गादुत्तारय ह्लीँ ह्लीँ ह्लीँ सर्व्वदुःखान्मोचनि भगवति दुर्गोत्तारिणि महायोगेश्वरि ह्लीँ नमोऽस्तु ते स्वाहा । एतां भगवतीं दुर्गोत्तारिणीतारां मुहुः श्यामां चतुर्भुजां वामेन पाशं दक्षिणेनाङ्कुशधारिणीं भक्तमाश्वासयन्तीं दक्षिणेन वरदां दिव्यमालाम्बरधारिणीं वामेन नीलोत्पलहस्तां सितवस्त्रप्रावृतदेहां पद्मासनस्थां त्रिकालं ध्यायेत् । सर्व्वदुःखेभ्य उत्तारयति । बन्धनात् मोचयति । शृङ्खलाविनिवेष्टितं पाशेन बद्धं ग्रहग्रस्तं वा उत्तारयति । बन्धस्थेन जप्तव्या । सहस्रमष्टशतं वा दिने दिने जपेत् मोचयति । यदि न मुञ्चति तदा मूर्द्धानं स्फुटति [भूम्यां] लुठति । स्वस्थो वदति अमुकं मुञ्चेति । तं यदि न मुञ्चति तदा शिरोवेदन भवति, ज्वरो महान् भवति, विषमा विसूचिका भवति, साधकाय दर्शनं ददाति, सप्तमे दिवसेऽवश्यं मोचयति । एषा भगवती दुर्गोत्तारिणी कथिता ह्लँ ह्लीँ सप्त वारान् पुष्पमभिमन्त्र्य दातव्यम् । पूजा । सँमध्ये खँ ताँ वामावर्त्तेन वँ आँ जीँ हुँ । वामावर्त्तेन लोँ माँ पाँ ताँ ।

॥ दुर्गोत्तारिणीसाधनं समाप्तम् ॥

उत्थाय पूर्व्वसन्ध्यायां भूप्रदेशे मनोहरे ।
मृद्वासनोपविष्टः सन् स्वहृदि चन्द्रमण्डले ॥

पञ्चमस्य प्रथमं तु द्वितीयस्वरयोजितम् ।
अर्द्धेन्दुबिन्दुसंयुक्तं सितरश्मिविभूषितम् ॥

तस्य शुक्लमयूखैस्तु तारामाकृष्य व्योमनि ।
द्विभुजां सितदेहां तु वरदोत्पलधारिणीम् ॥

पञ्चोपचारपूजाभिः पूजयित्वा तु भक्तितः ।
पापानां देशनां पश्चात् ततः पुण्यानुमोदनाम् ।

तत्परिणामनां चैव त्रिशरणगमनं तथा ॥
ॐ शून्यताज्ञानवज्रस्वभावात्मकोऽहमिति पठेत् ।

इति स्वपरशून्यं वै ध्यात्वा योगी विधानवित् ।
सितारविन्दमध्यस्थचन्द्रबिम्बासनोपरि ॥

पूर्व्वोक्तबीजनिष्पन्नां तारादेवीं मनोरमाम् ।
आबद्धवज्रपर्य्यङ्कां वरदोत्पलधारिणीम् ॥

शरच्चन्द्रकराकारां पृष्ठचन्द्रसमाश्रिताम् ।
सर्व्वालङ्कारसम्पूर्णां षोडशाब्दवपुष्मतीम् ॥

सर्व्वसंबुद्धतत्पुत्रमातरं कामरूपधाम् ।
ध्यात्वाऽर्य्यतारां हृदये तस्याश्चक्रं सितद्युति ॥

अष्टकोष्ठकमष्टाभिरक्षरैः परिपूरितम् ।
ॐह्राव्यञ्जनमध्यस्थसाध्यनामाद्यनाभिकम् ॥

ध्यायादेकाग्रचित्तः सन् षण्मासान् दृढनिश्चयः ।
जपेदखिन्नचित्तः सन् मन्त्रमेनं दशाक्षरम् ॥

ॐकारमादितो दत्त्वा पश्चात् तारे प्रयोजयेत् ।
तुत्तारे स्यात् तुरे पश्चात् स्वाहान्तं सार्वकर्म्मिकम् ॥

ब्रह्मेन्द्रविष्णुचन्द्रार्करुद्रदिक्कालमन्मथैः ।
अप्यखण्डितरोमाग्रो मृत्युं जयति मुक्तवत् ॥

वलिपलितदौर्भाग्यव्याधिदारिद्र्यसंक्षयः ।
सिंहाद्यष्टमहाभीतिदुःखसन्दोहनाशनम् ॥

अयाचितान्नपानादिहर्म्यवस्त्रादिसङ्गमः ।
खट्वाञ्जनपादलेपभद्रकुम्भादिसिद्धयः ॥

कविता वक्तृता मेधा प्रज्ञा चैकान्तनिर्म्मला ।
अन्या च वाञ्छिता सिद्धिश्चक्रादस्मात् प्रजायते ॥

॥ मृत्युवञ्चनोपदेशतारासाधनं समाप्तम् ॥

विश्वमातायै नमः ।

ध्यात्वा चन्द्रार्कमध्ये त्वलिकलिसहिते तोयबीजाब्जमेकं,
तेनोत्पन्नैकवक्त्रां यमकरकमलां देवतीं चन्द्रवर्णाम्।

आरूढां श्वेतनागं सितजलजकरीं चाभयां श्वेतवस्त्रां,
श्वेतालङ्कारयुक्तां प्रहसितवदनां प्रेषयन् साध्यवेश्म ॥

तस्मात् साध्यं गृहीत्वा पुनरपि च विभोर्म्मण्डले सम्प्रविष्टा,
भर्त्तुश्चाज्ञां प्रलब्धाः पुनरमृतघटैर्लोचनाद्याः प्रहृष्टाः ।

तं साध्यं स्नापयन्ति प्रवरदशविधाः शक्तयः पूजयन्ति,
रूपाद्याः पोषयन्ति प्रकटदशबलास्यादयस्तोषयन्ति ॥

भूताख्याश्चा ह्वयन्ति प्रवरदशविधाः क्रोधजाः पालयन्ति,
नागिन्यश्चुम्बयन्ति त्वमरयुवतयो द्वादशालिङ्गयन्ति ।

चण्डाः कुर्व्वन्ति रक्षां सकलभुवितले यान्ति पुष्ट्यर्थहेतो
रेवं साध्यं च सर्व्वं परमसुखकरं योगिनां भावनीयम् ॥

॥ विश्वमातासाधनं समाप्तम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

पूर्व्वक्रमप्रयोगेन भगमध्ये शशिमण्डले ।
हेमवर्णां महाघोरां तारादेवीं महर्द्धिकाम् ।
त्रिनेत्रामष्टवदनां भुजषोडशभूषिताम् ॥

ऊर्द्धपिङ्गलकेशां सार्द्ध शतार्द्धमुण्डमालाकृतहाराम्—

प्रत्यालीढपदोपेतां जगत्त्राणां महाबलाम् ।
विचित्रवस्त्रनेपथ्यां हसन्तीं नवयौवनाम् ॥

प्रधानमुखं पीतं दक्षिणे द्वितीयं नीलं तृतीयं श्यामं चतुर्थं गगनश्यामं वामे कुन्दसन्निभं द्वितीयं रक्तं तृतीयं गगनश्यामं ऊर्द्धास्यं धूम्रवर्णाभं महाघोरं मध्यास्यं विकटोत्कटं दक्षिणकरेषु खड्गोत्पलशरवज्राङ्कुशदण्डकर्त्त्रिअभयधरां वामभुजेषु सपाशतर्ज्जनिकपालधनुःखट्वाङ्गसवज्रपाशब्रह्मशिरोरलकलशधरां विश्वपद्मचन्द्रस्थां सूर्य्यप्रभाविभूषितां वामपादेनेन्द्रं दक्षिणपादेनोपेन्द्रं पादद्वयमध्ये रुद्रं ब्रह्माणं चाक्रम्य स्थितां सर्व्वावरणविनाशनीं भावयेत् । योगी लघु सिद्धिमवाप्नुयात् । जपमन्त्रः ॐ प्रसन्नतारे अमृतमुखि अमृतलोचने सर्व्वार्थसाधनि सर्व्वसत्त्ववशङ्करि हुँ फट् हुँ स्वाहा ।

॥ सर्व्वार्थसाधिन्याः प्रसन्नतारायाः साधनं समाप्तम् ॥

नमस्तारायै

ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे स्वाहा। ॐ कुरुकुल्ले स्वाहा। मूलमन्त्रः शरीरे न्यस्तव्यः, हृदयमन्त्रेण जापः कर्त्तव्यः, ॐकारं शिरसि न्यस्तव्यम्, कुकारं शिखायां न्यस्तव्यम्, रुकारं चक्षुषि युञ्जयेत् कुकारं कंवचं कुर्य्यात्।

लकारं मस्तकमूर्द्धिन लेकारं हृदये न्यसेत्।
स्वाकारं नाभिदेशे तु हाकारं पादयोर्न्यसेत्॥

एवं अक्षरविन्यास आत्मदेहे साधकेन कर्त्तव्यः।

ॐकारं श्वेतवर्णाभं कुकारं श्याममेव च।
रुकारं रक्तमेवोक्तं कुकारं श्वेतमेव च॥

लकारं पीतमुद्दिष्टं लेकारं श्याममेव च।
स्वाकारं रक्तमुद्दिष्टं हाकारं कृष्णमेव च॥

एवमेवाक्षराणां वर्णं कथितम्। ताराया मन्त्रमेवम्—एहि देवि भगवति, प्रसादं मे देवि कुरु, पूजां गृहाणात्र सन्निहिता भव आवाहनमन्त्रः। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे हुँ फट् स्वाहा अर्घमन्त्रः। पद्ममुद्रां बद्धा सुगन्धपुष्पैरर्घो देयः। ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे सर्व्वकर्म्मसु योजयेत् ताँकारः। स एवंविधः ॐ ताँ ताँ ताँ ताँ ताँ इति। अनेन सर्व्वशत्रून् स्तम्भयति। अङ्गुलिषु न्यस्तव्यः। सर्व्वशत्रोर्हस्ते दर्शयेत्, ततः स्तम्भितो भवति। त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ पुनः यस्य संप्रत्ययतो भवति। ताँकारं लक्षं जपेत्। ग्रामशतं लभते। ॐ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ अनेन सर्व्वरक्षा भवति। राजकुलप्रवेशे गोरोचनां अष्टशताभिमन्त्रितां कृत्वा तिलकं दत्त्वा अष्टसु स्थानेषु योजयेत्। शिखायां ललाटे कण्ठे हृदये नाभौ जानुनोः पादयोश्चेति एवं मन्त्रा न्यस्तव्याः। अनेनैव गोरोचनया अक्षिण्यञ्जयेत्। ततो राजकुलप्रवेशे राजा समभिमुखमवलोक्य कथयति। शतसहस्रजापेन सर्व्वसत्त्वा वश्या भवन्ति। त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ ॐ अस्य मन्त्रस्य लक्षं जापयेत्। ग्रामसहस्रं लभते, भगवतीं तारां च पश्यति। दीपमन्त्रः। ॐ रुँ रुँ रुँ हः हः फट् स्वाहा शिखाबन्धमन्त्रः। ॐ ताँ ताँ ताँ ताँ ताँ बन्ध ता हा हः स्वाहा अधोर्द्धमन्त्रः। अयं ताराजापविधिक्रमः—ॐ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ त्रुँ हृदयमन्त्रः। अनेन अयं वशकर्म्मणि प्रयोजयेत्। वशीकरण-मण्डलमालिख्य श्मशानाङ्गारेण प्रतिकृतिं कृत्वा शिखायां ताँ, ताँ गुह्ये, ति पादयोरेवं विन्यस्य करवीरपुष्पैर्भंगं ताडयेत्। अनेन मन्त्रेण सा वश्या भवति। आकर्षणे गोरोचनया भूर्जपत्रे स्त्रिया वा पुरुषस्य वा प्रतिकृतिं कृत्वा ति शिरसि, ति हृदये, ति गुह्यदेशे, ति पादयोः, तँ ललाटे एवं अक्षरविन्यासं कुर्य्यात्।

अथ पटविधाने भगवतीं तारां लिखेत् चतुर्भुजां रक्तश्यामकृष्णशुक्लवर्णां विश्वरूपां एकहस्तेन पाशं अपरेण खड्गं उत्पलं तथा अङ्कुशहस्तां अङ्कुशेनाकर्षयन्तीं चिन्तयेत्। योजनशतसहस्रादप्याकर्षयति। लक्षजापो देयः। यं इच्छति तं वशमानयति। ततोऽङ्गुलिं विन्यसेत्। ततः शत्रोर्नामाभिलिख्य हस्तेनावष्टभ्य तावद् जपेत् यावत् तत्कालग्रहः। कृष्णवर्णां विचिन्तयेत्। ॐ त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ त्राँ ॐ अस्य

लक्षजापेनाभिषेकबन्धो भवति। अथ नीलोत्पलपुष्पैर्भगवतीं तारां दशसहस्रैरर्च्चयित्वा अस्य जापो देयः एकैकेनार्च्चयित्वा जपेत्। अस्यानुशंसात् सर्व्वजनप्रियो भवति त्रिकालमष्टशतिको जापः। एवमेव सेवा। राजकुले वा व्यवहारे वा देवागारे वा अरण्ये वा सर्वत्र भगवती तारा रक्षां करोति इति।

आर्य्यताराभट्टारिकायाः कल्पः समाप्तः।

महाश्रीतारायै नमः

आदौ तावन्मन्त्री [ॐ] स्वभावशुद्ध इत्यादिमन्त्रेणाधितिश्च शून्यतां विभाव्य तदनन्तरं शुभ्राकारोद्भूतचन्द्रमण्डलं तदुपरि हरिततांकारबीजसम्भूतां महाश्रीतारां चन्द्रासनस्थां श्यामवर्णां द्विभुजां हस्तद्वयेन व्याख्यानमुद्राधरां एकवक्त्रां सर्व्वालङ्कारभूषितां पार्श्वद्वयेनोत्पलशोभां सुवर्णसिंहासनोपरि अपाश्रयादिशोभां नानापुष्पाशोकचम्पकनागेश्वरपारिजातकादिभीराजिताममोघसिद्धिमुकुटिनीम्।

महाश्रीतारायाः पार्श्वे एकजटामर्द्धपर्य्यङ्कोपविष्टां नीलवर्णां कर्त्रिकपालधरां सक्रोधां लम्बोदरां पिङ्गलजटाविभूषितां व्याघ्रचर्म्माम्बरधराम्, दक्षिणे पार्श्वे अशोककान्तां पीतवर्णां रत्नमुकुटिनीं वज्राशोकधराम्, पुनर्वामे आर्य्यजाङ्गुलीं श्यामवर्णां सर्पवरदहस्ताम्, दक्षिणे महामायूरीं मयूरपिच्छवरदहस्ताम्। भावनावसानसमये उत्पलमुद्रां बन्धयेत्। ततोऽलातचक्राकारं पश्यन् मन्त्रं जपेत् ॐ तारे तुत्तारे तुरे धनं ददे स्वाहा।

राजलीलास्थिता देवी महाश्रीः करुणान्विता।

॥ महाश्रीतारिण्याः साधनं समाप्तम् ॥

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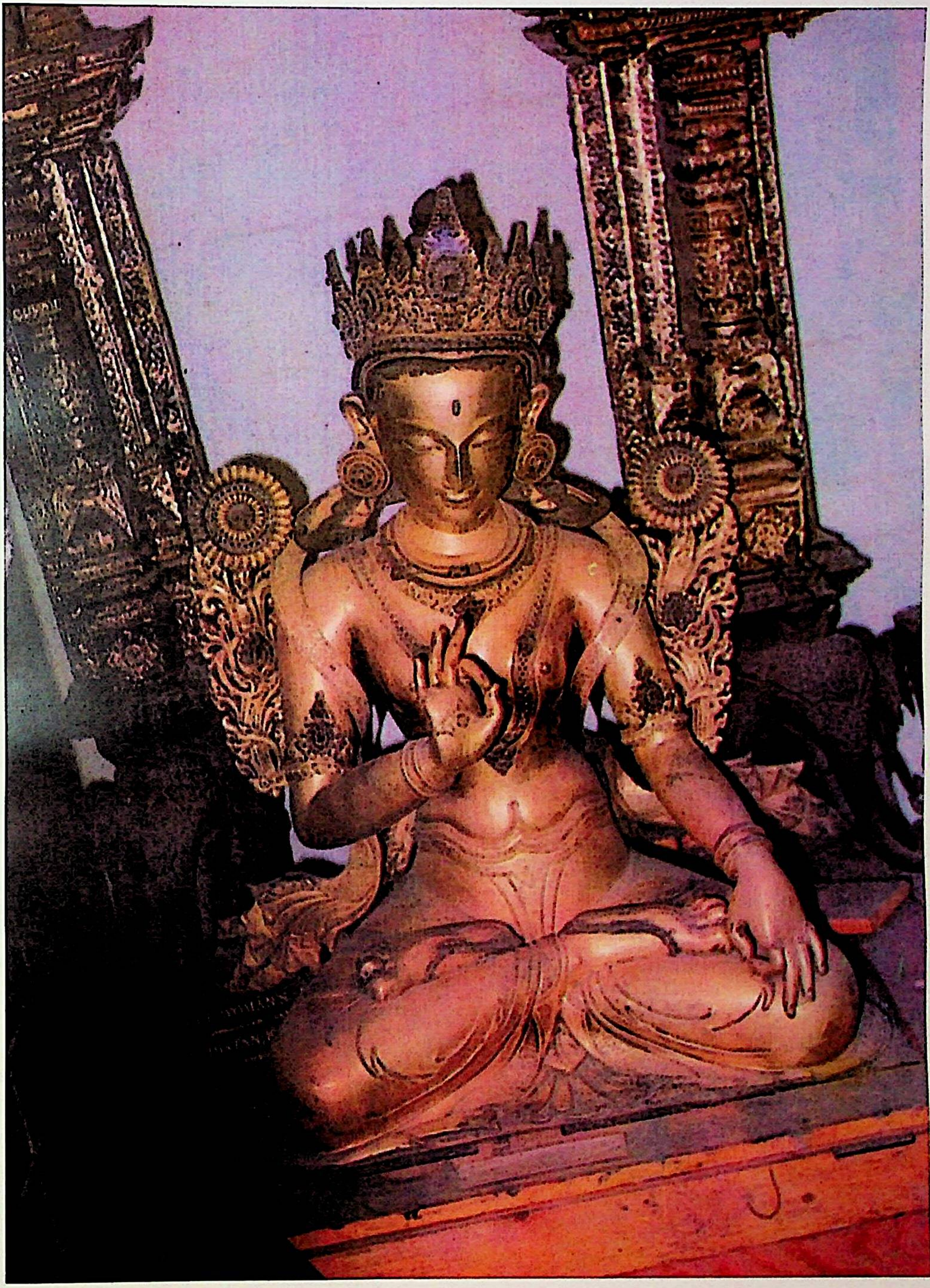
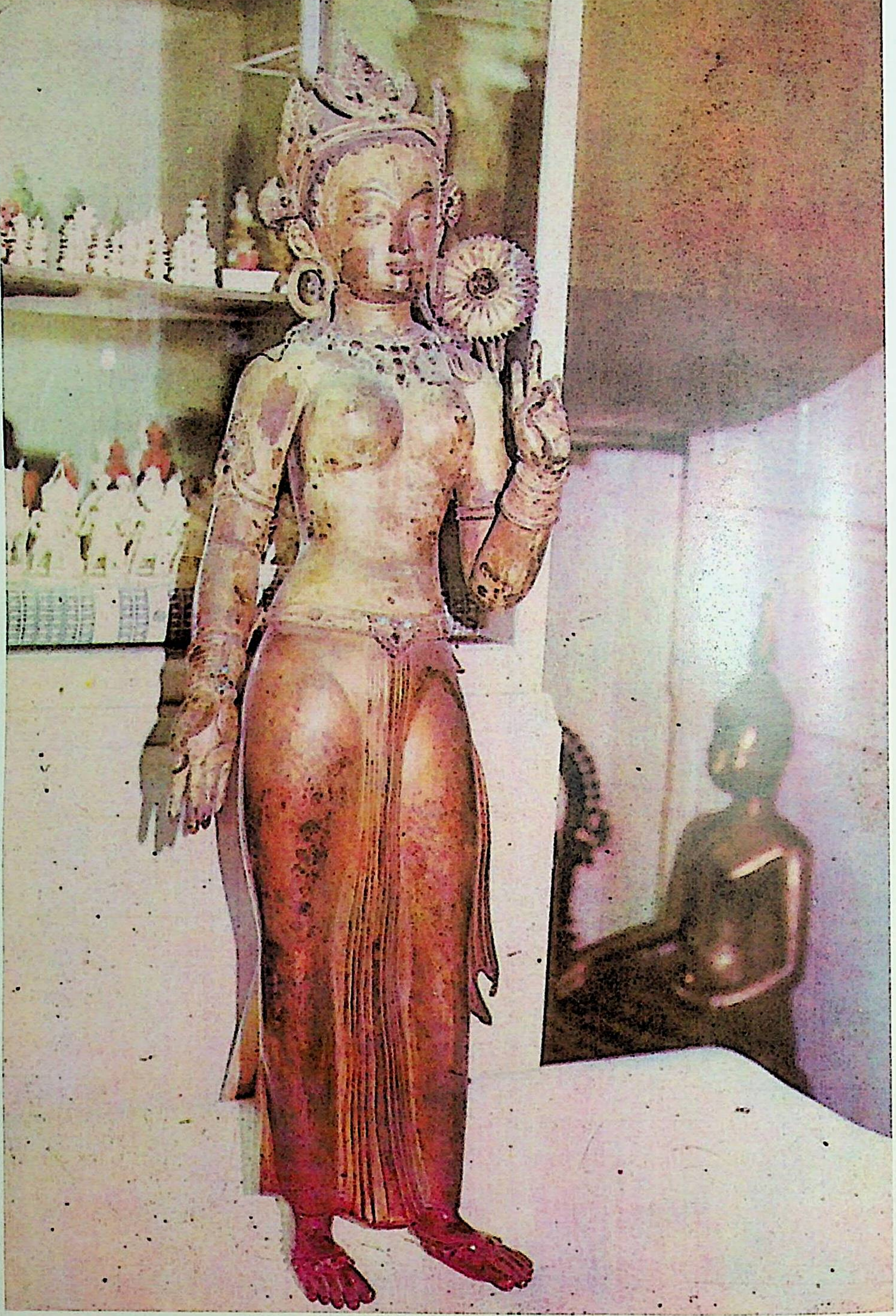
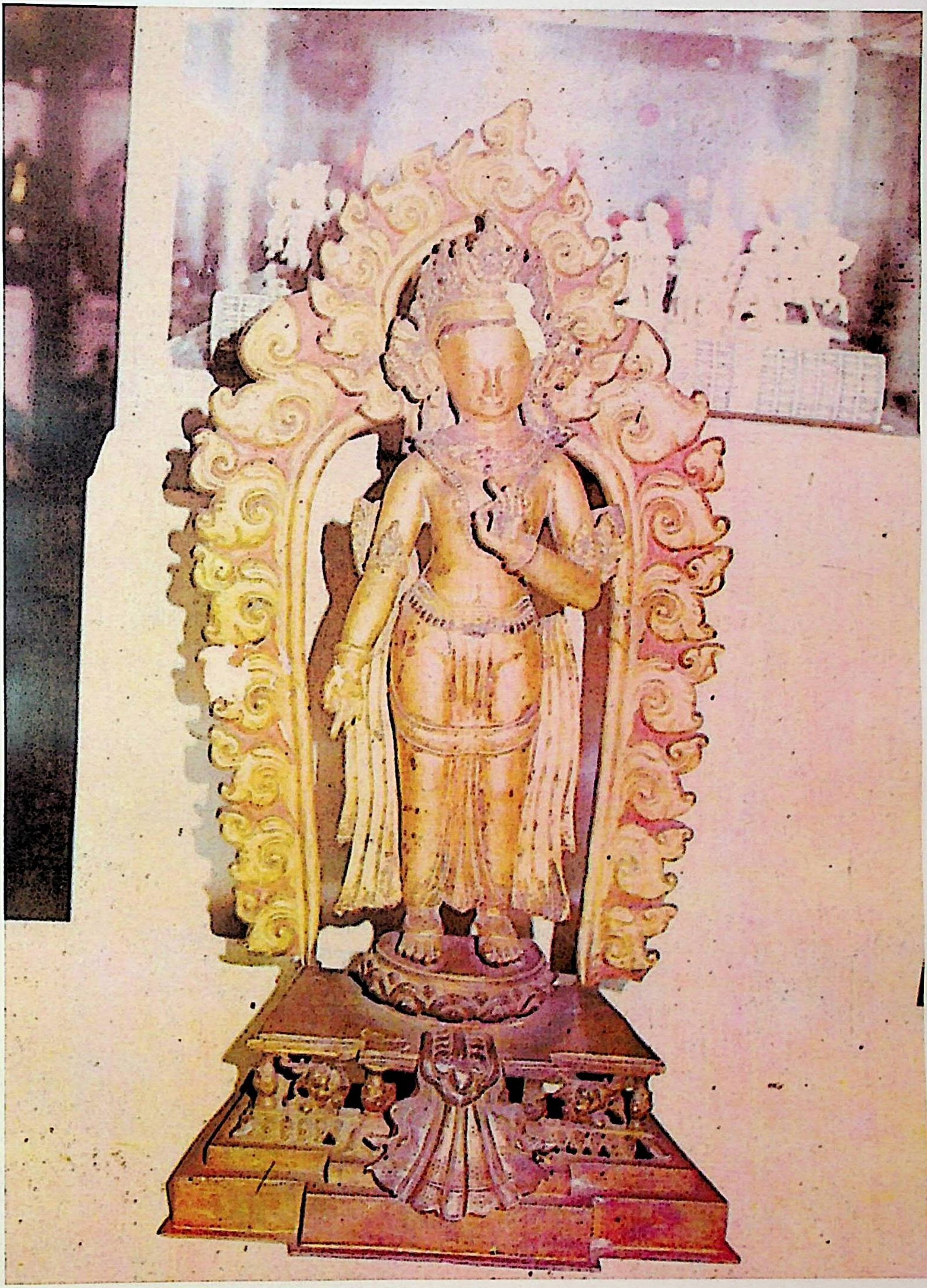


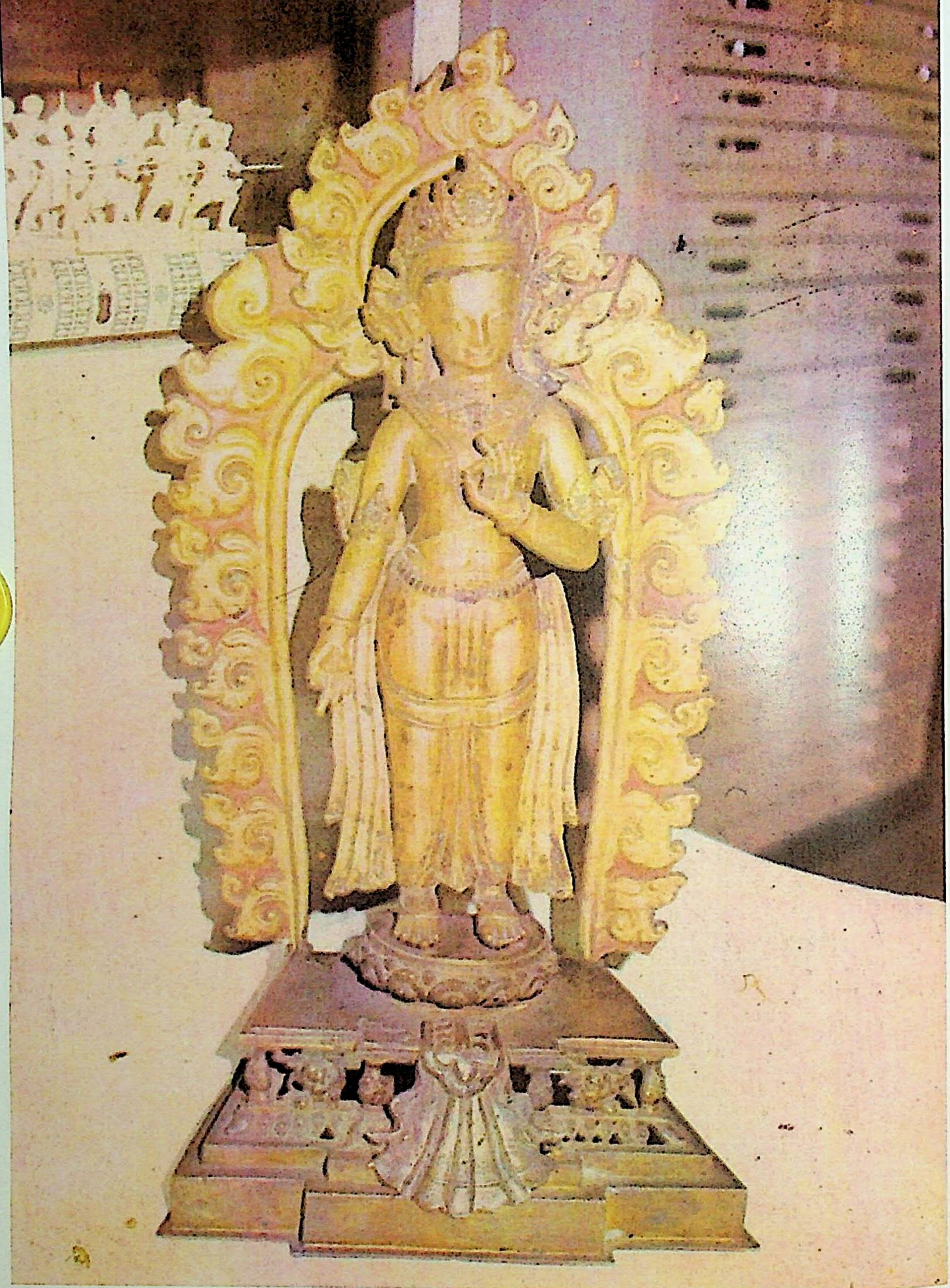
1. Tara seated, bronze. (Nepal) Victoria Albert Museum-London.



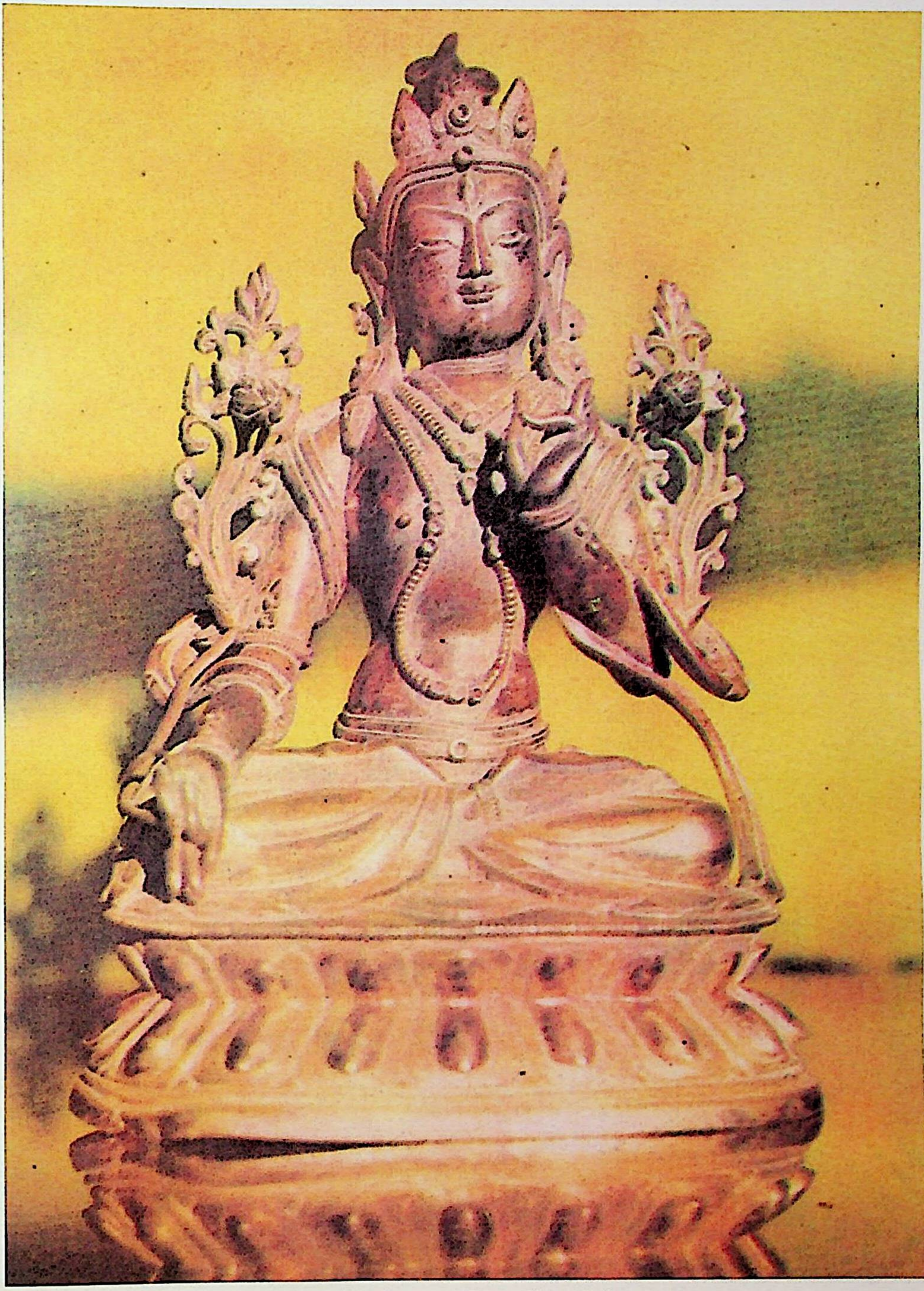
2. Tara standing with vajra, Bronze. London.



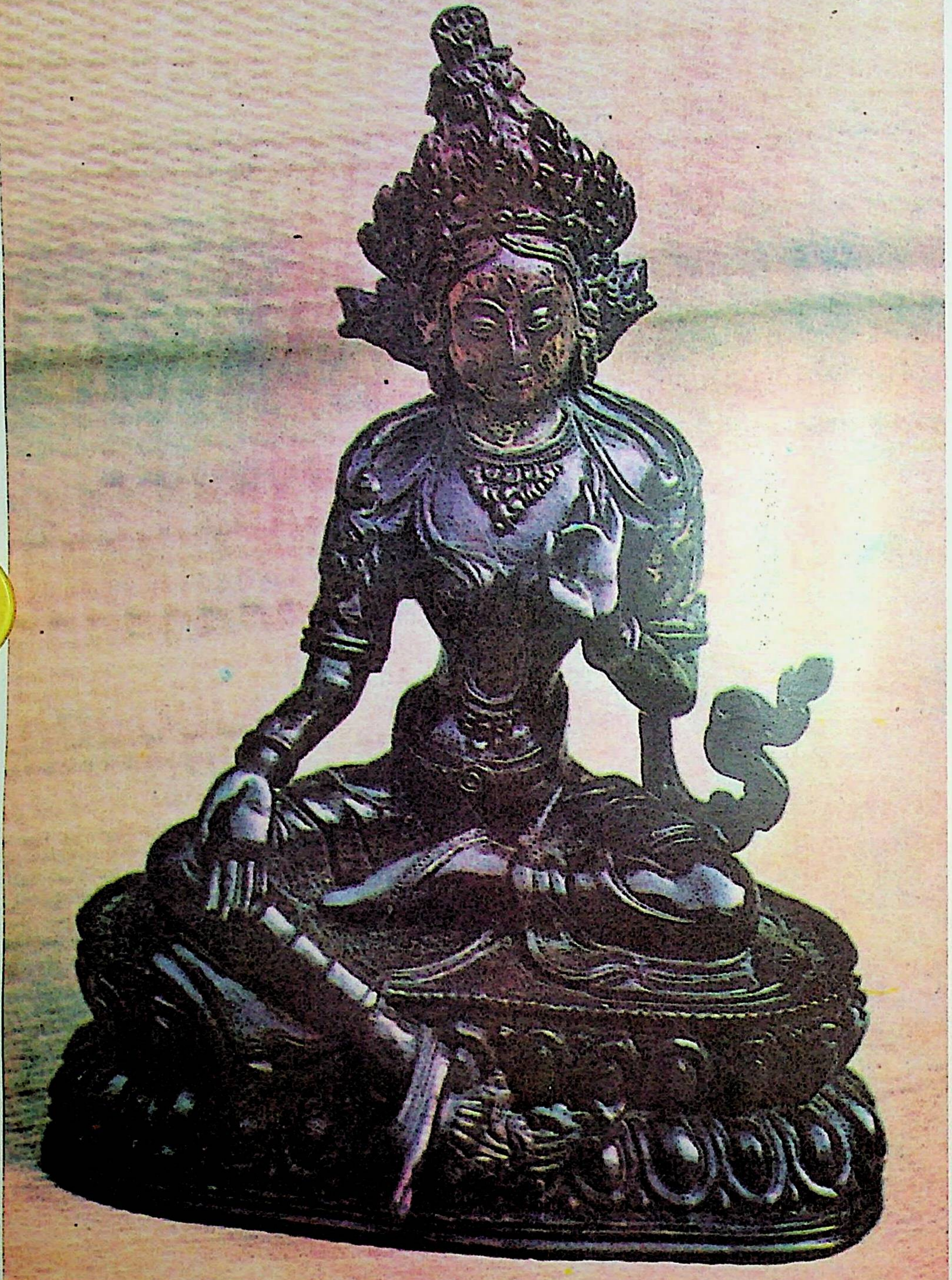
3. Tara standing with pedestal-Bronze. British Museum-London.



4. Tara standing - stone. British Museum-London.



5. Avalokiteshwara - Tibet - Fine gilt bronze.



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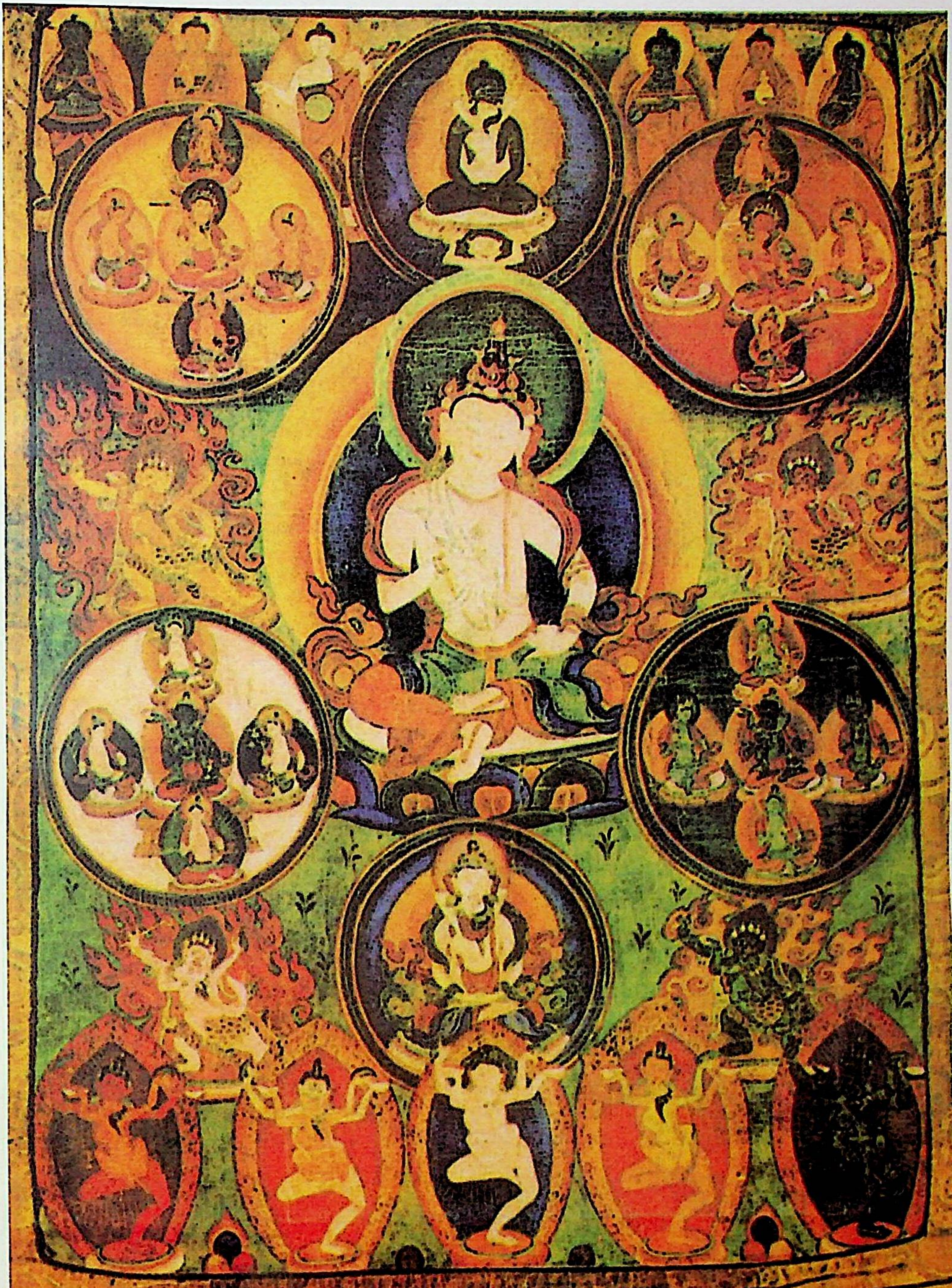

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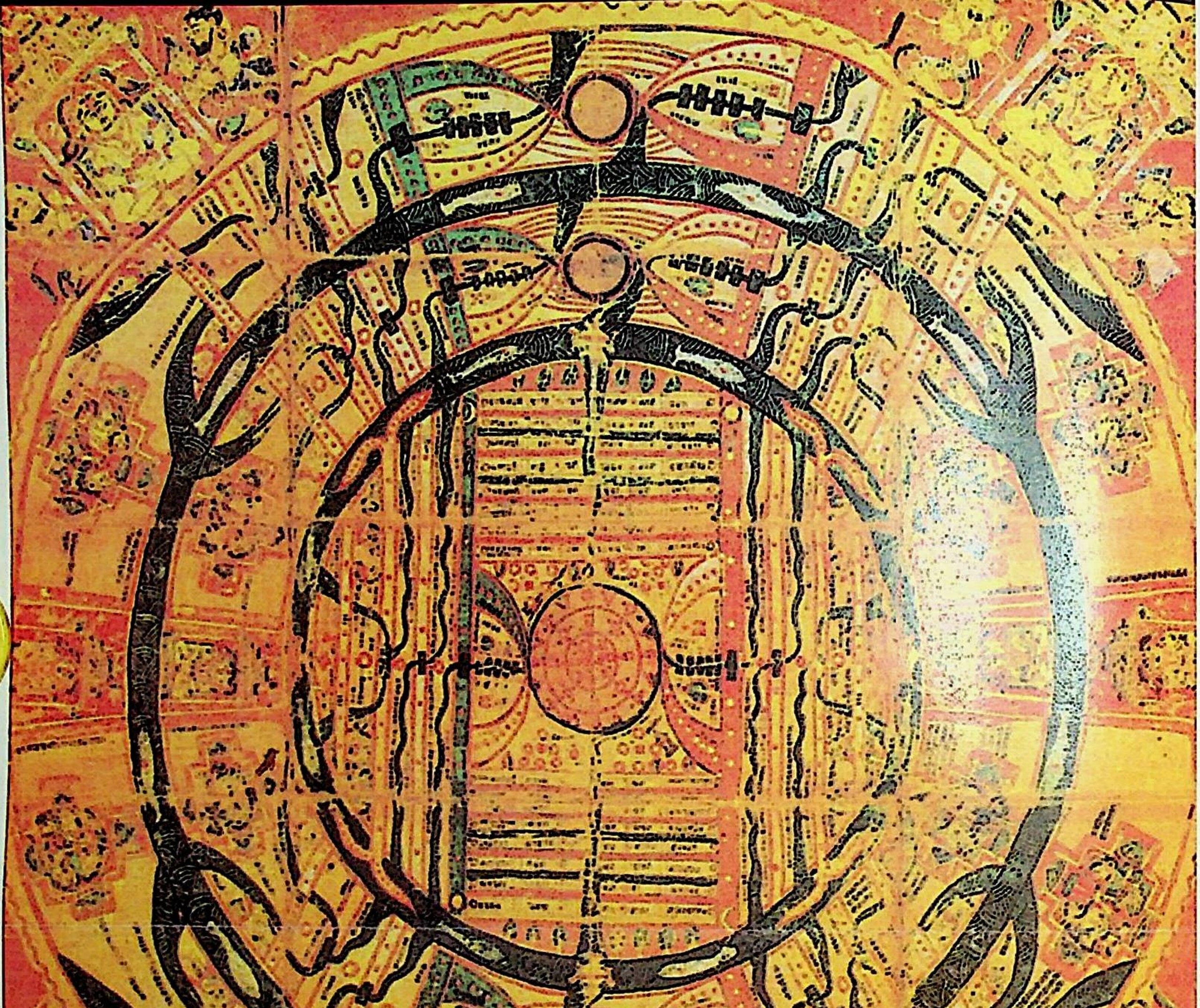

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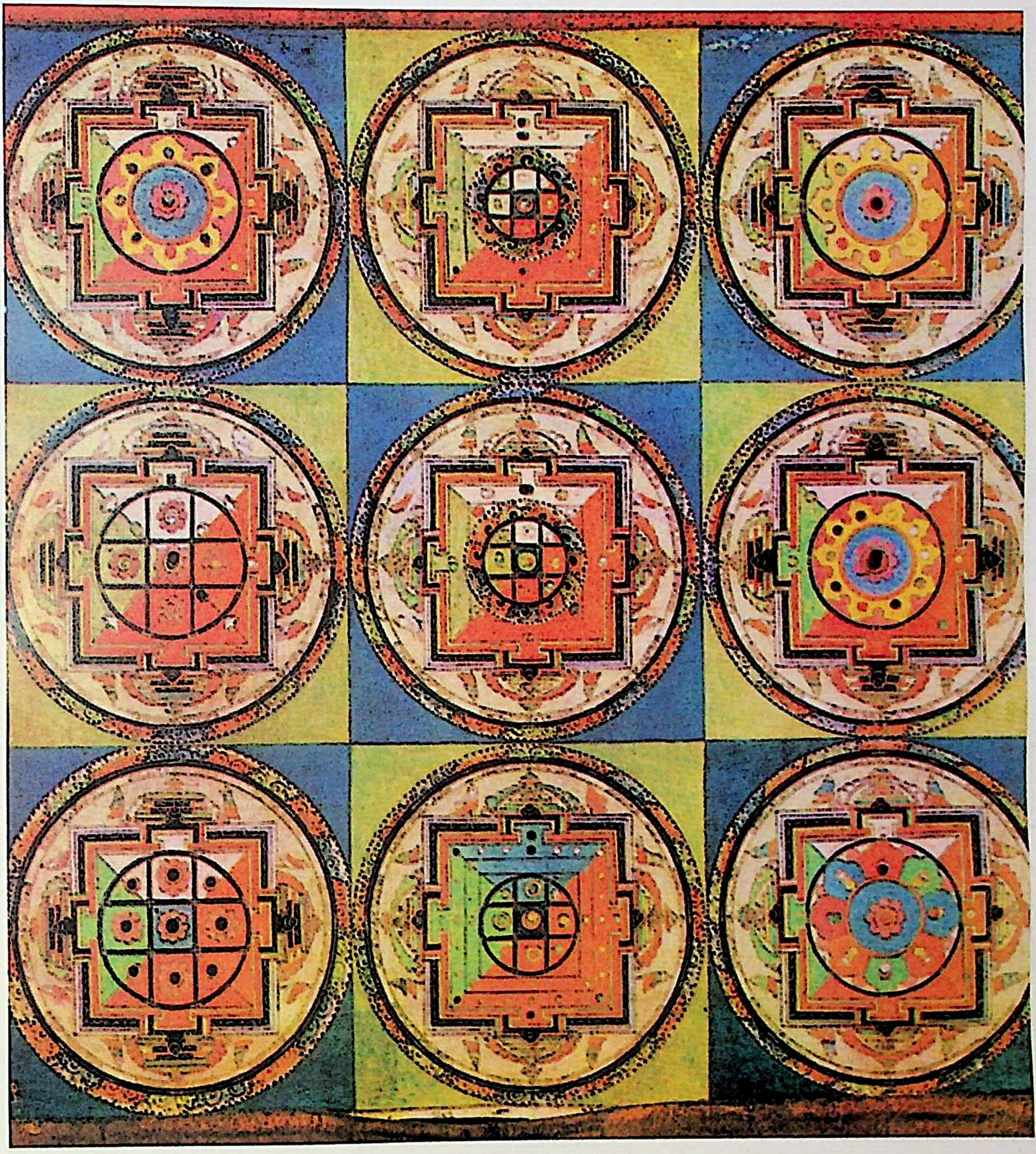

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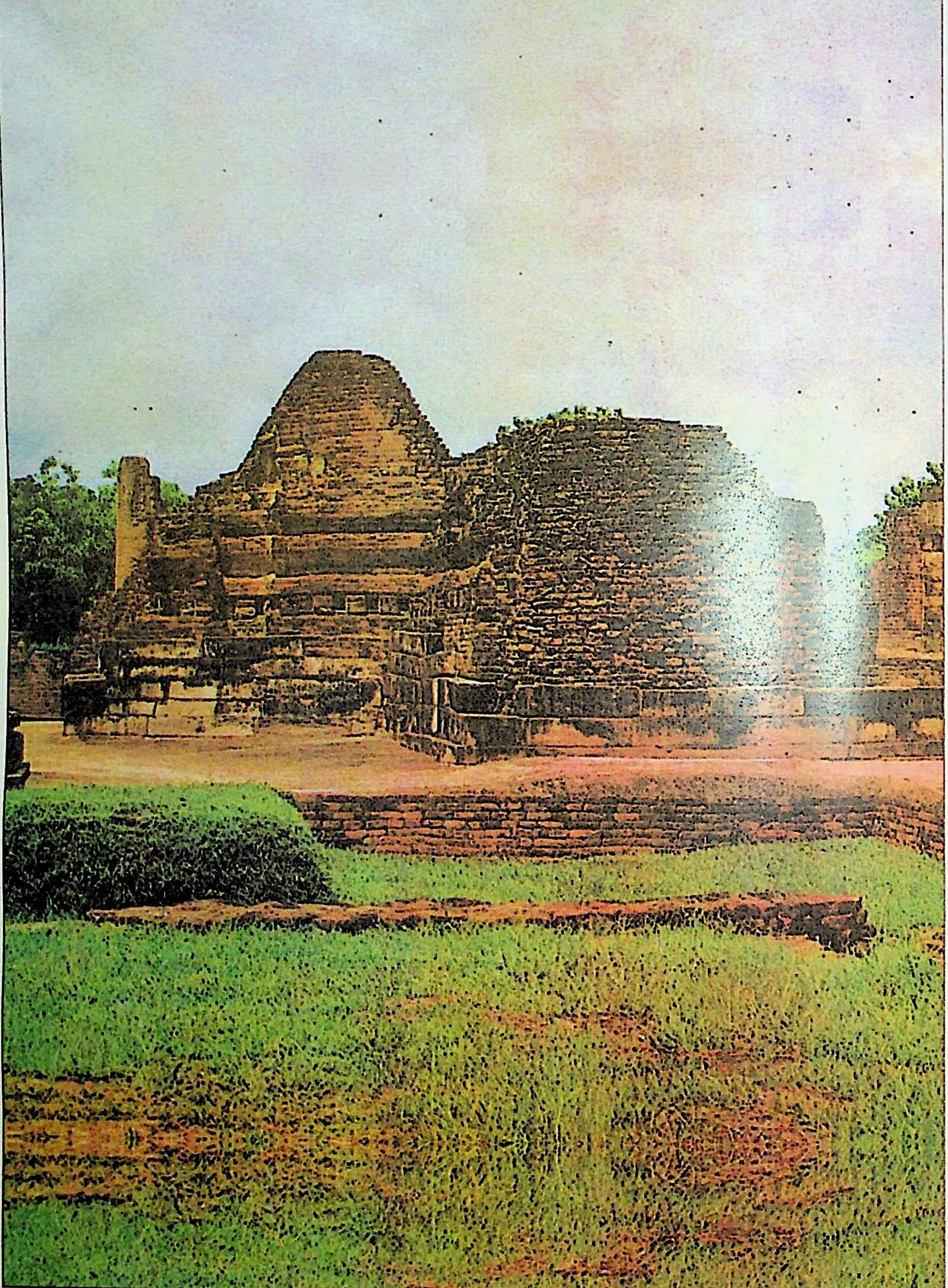

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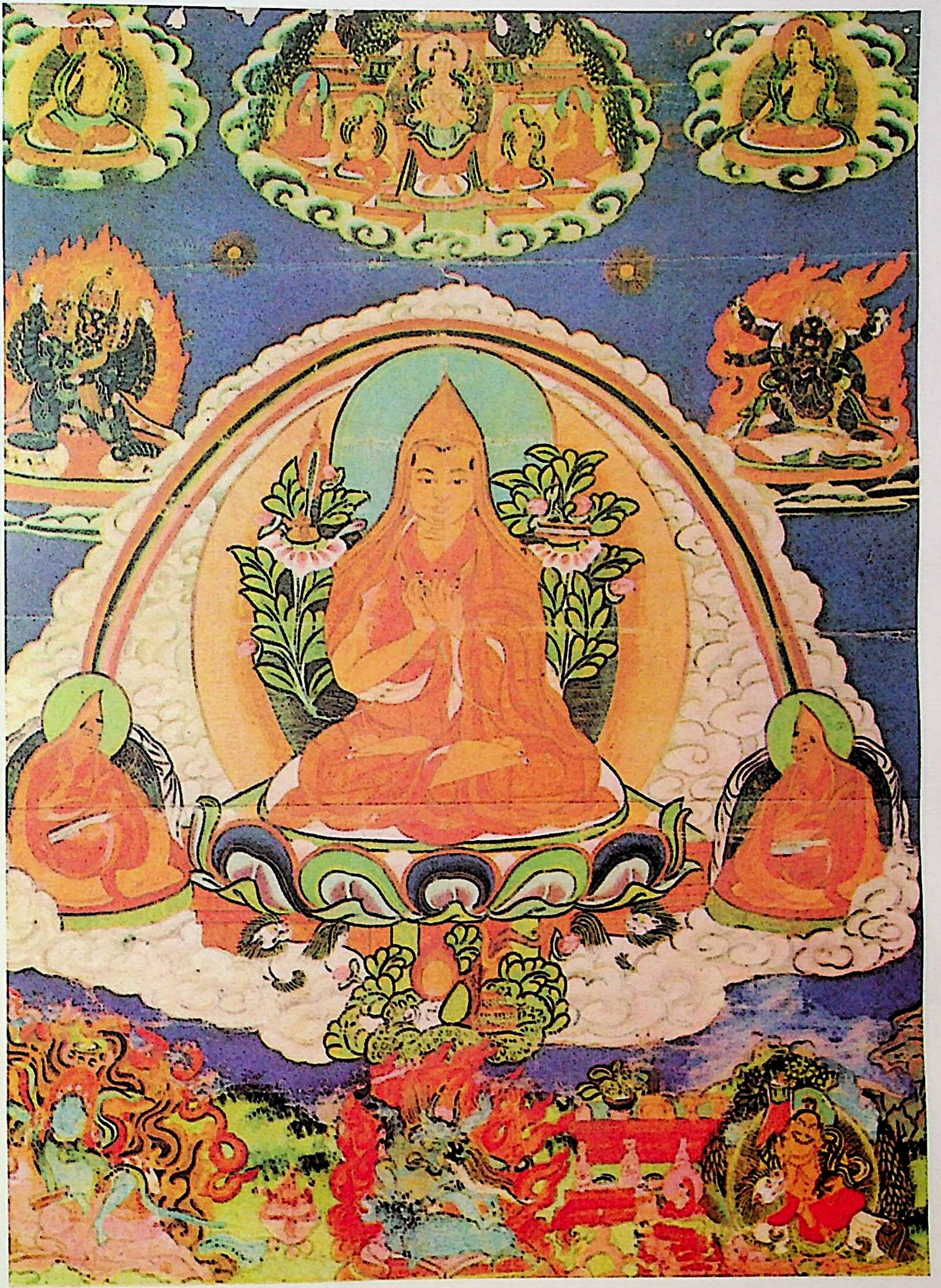

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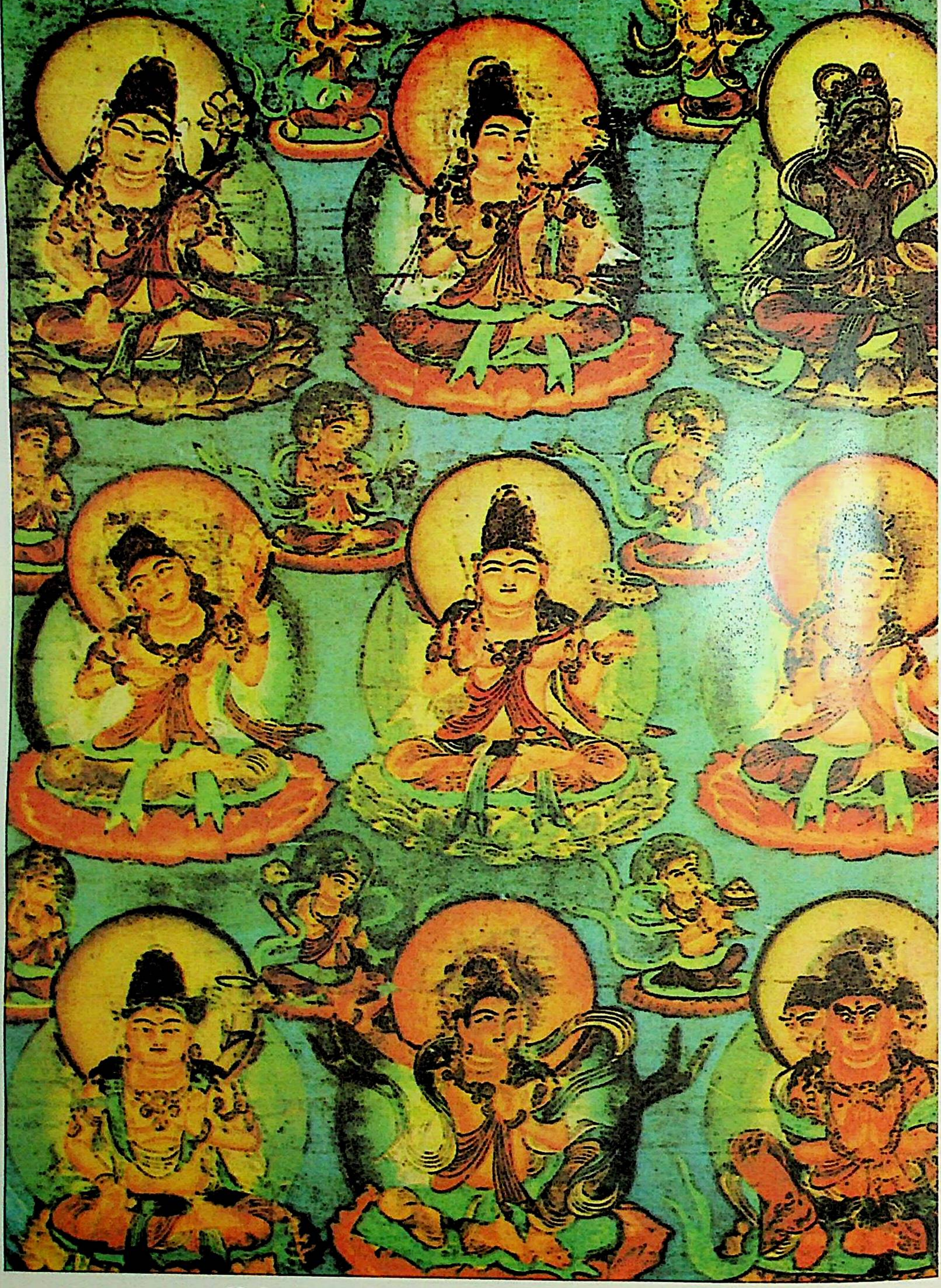

12. Japanese painting - vajradhatu Mandala. 9th cent.

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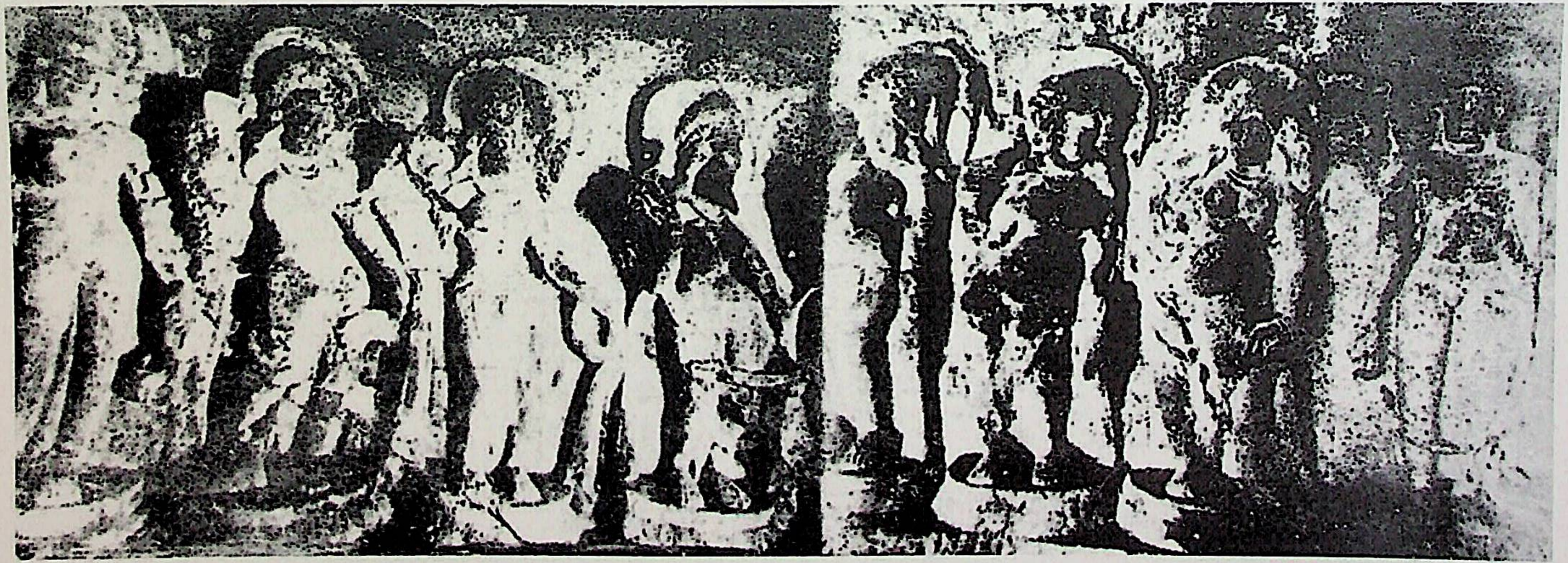
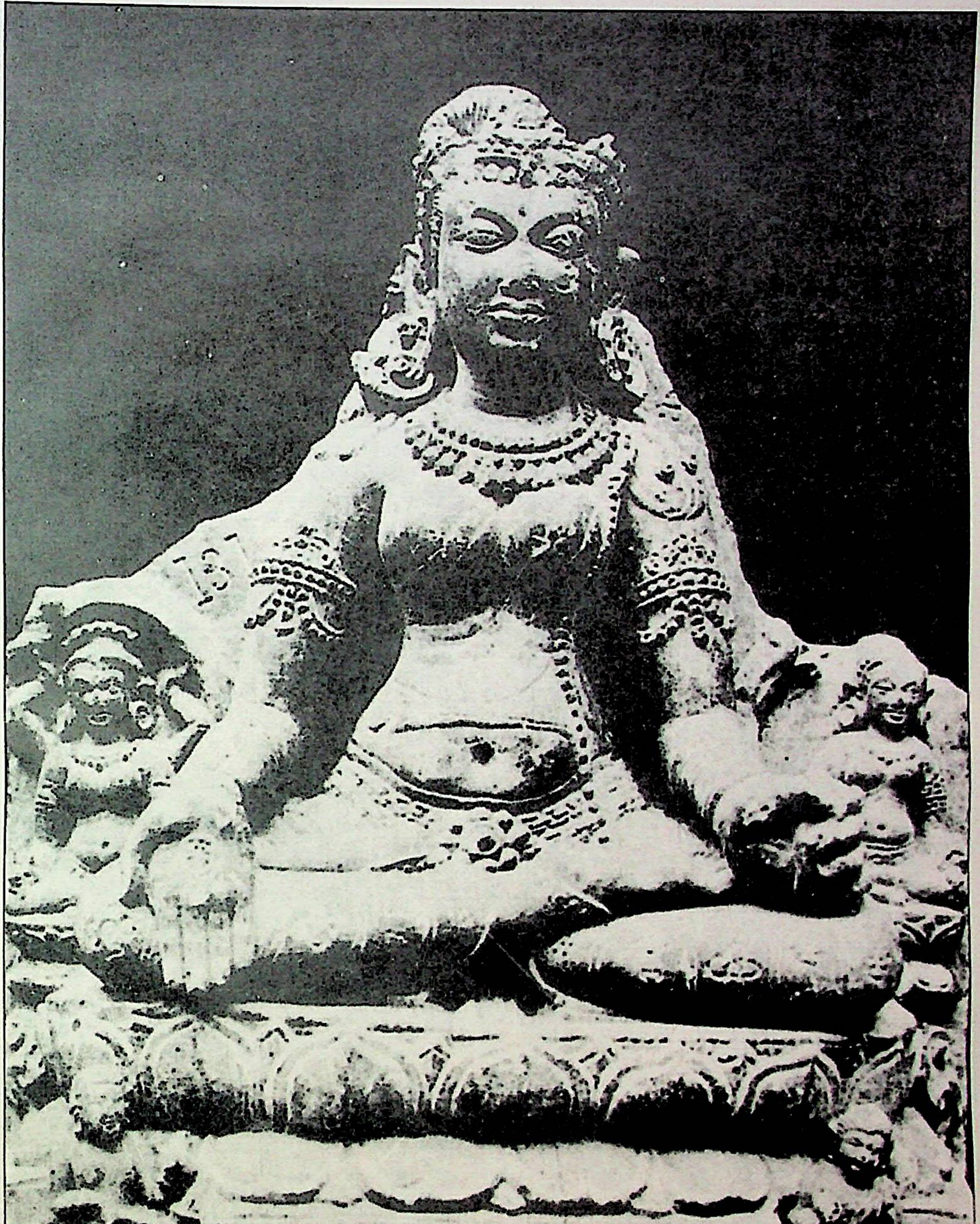
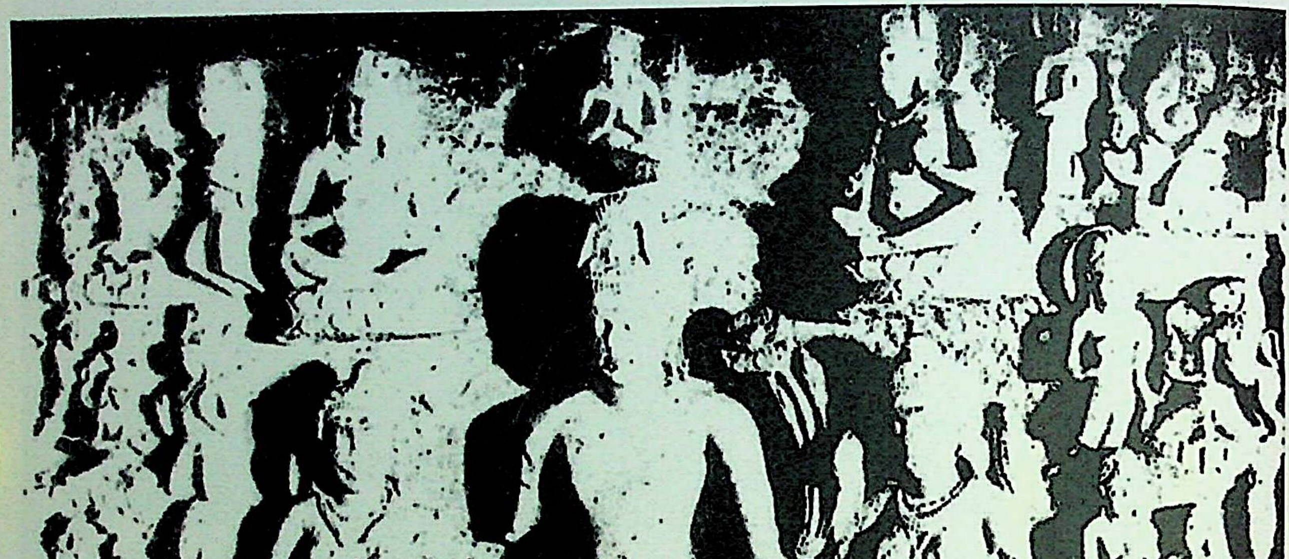


1. Group of six Buddhist Goddesses. Cave - 7 Aurangabad caves.

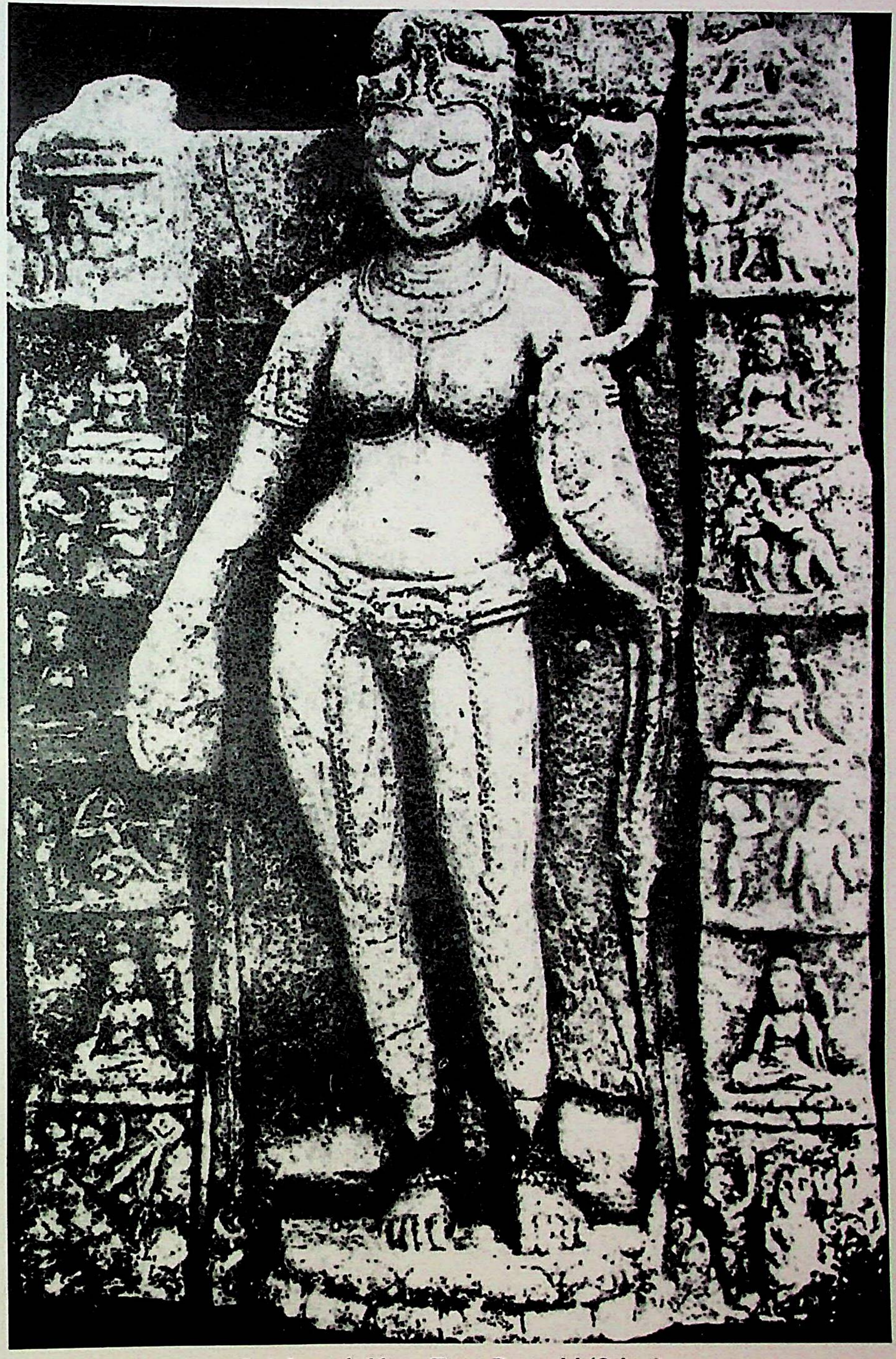
2. Ashtamahabhaya Tara cave - 9 - Elloras.



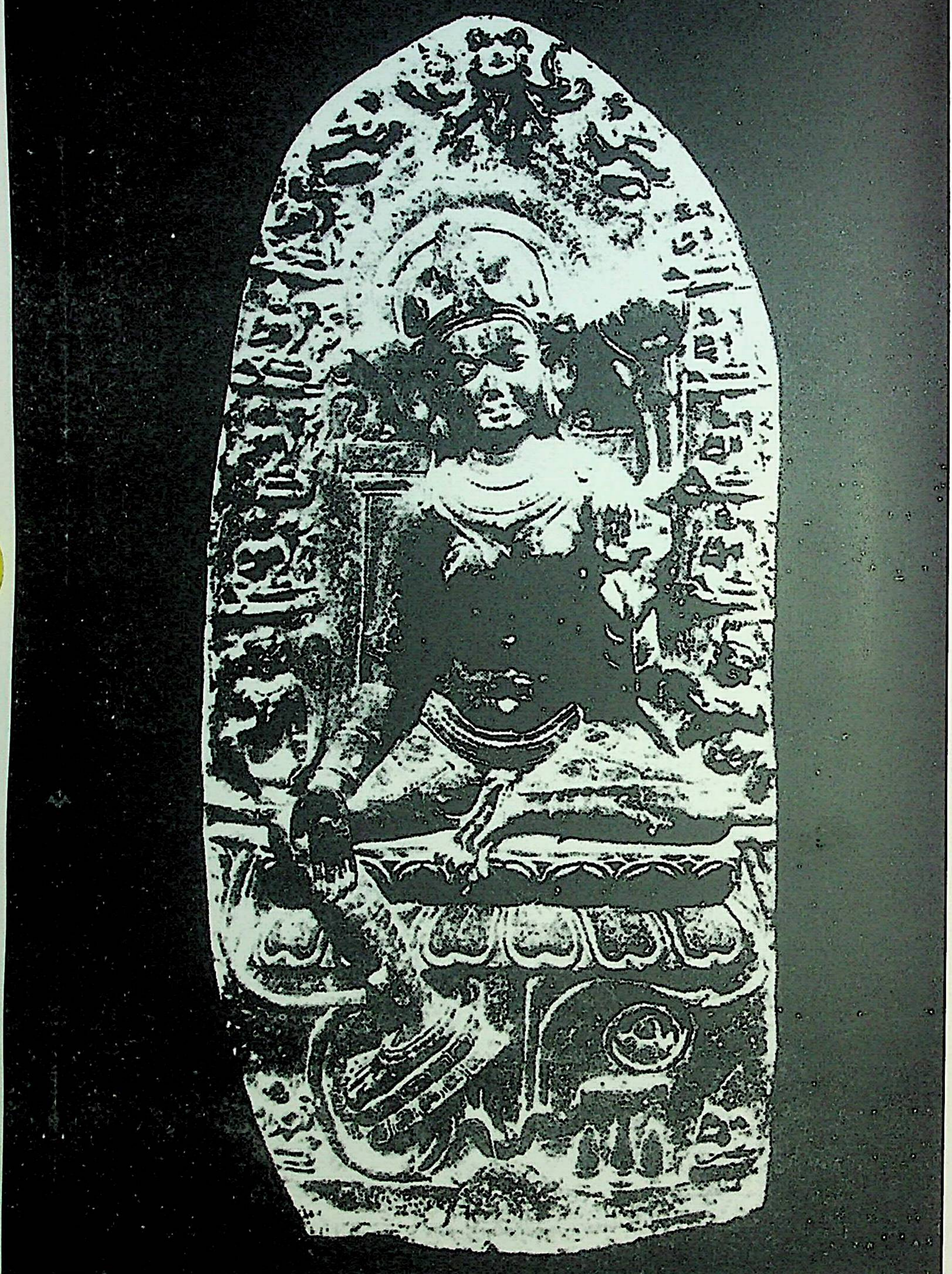
3. Tara - Indian Museum - Calcutta.



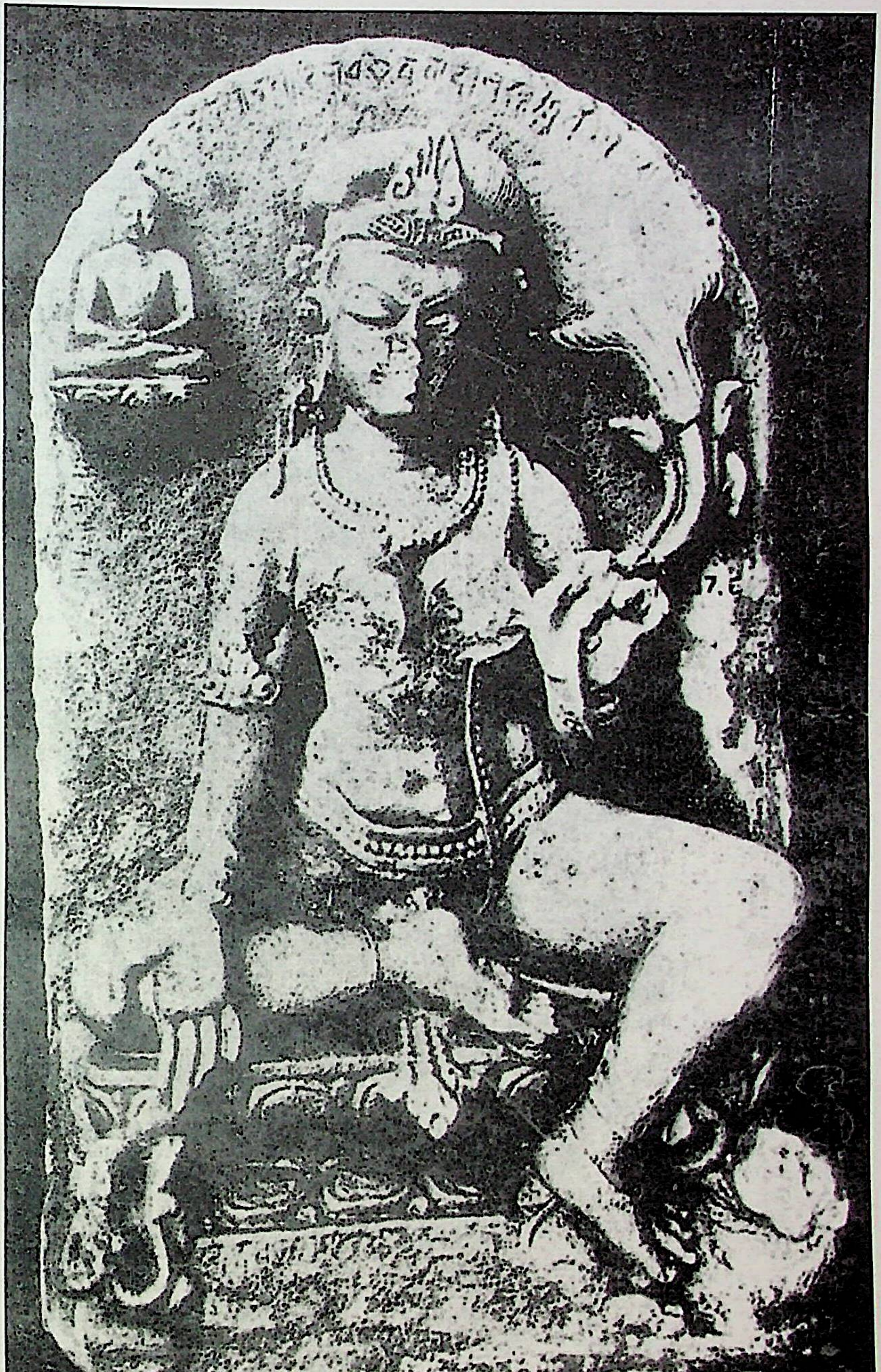
4. Avalokiteshwara as saviour from perils. cave - 90, Kanheri caves - Maharashtra.



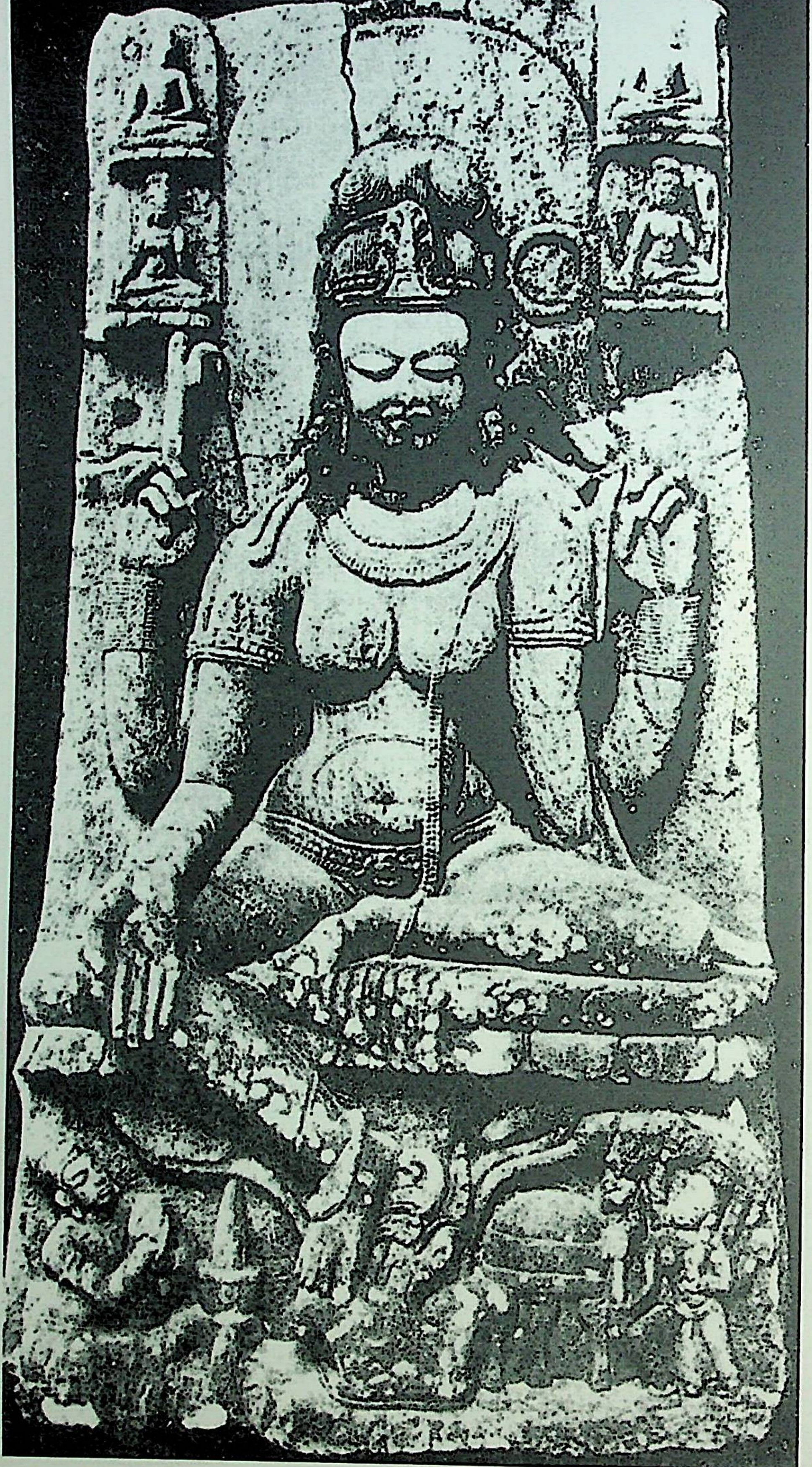
5. Ashtamahabhaya Tara - Ratnagiri (Orissa)



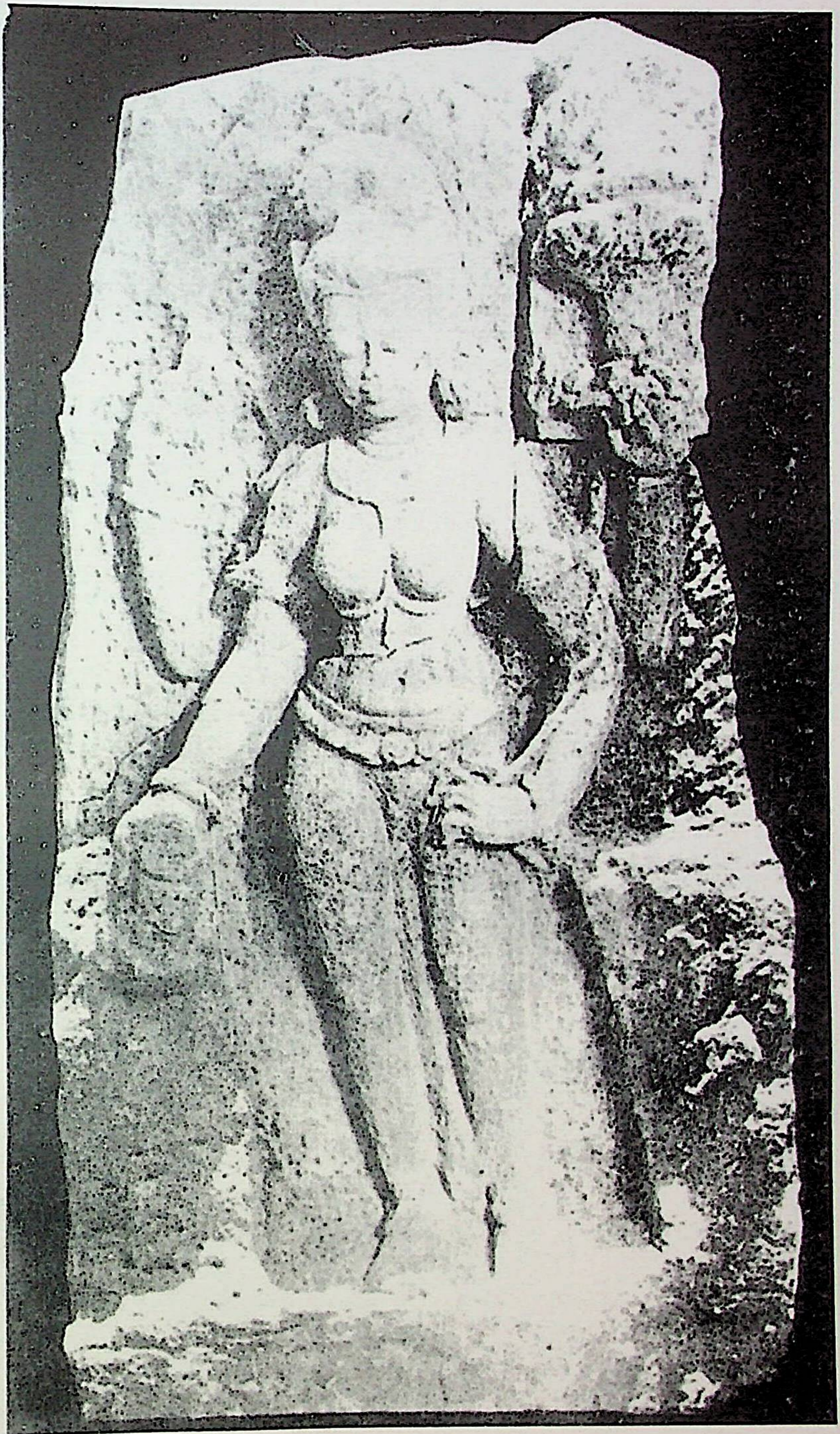
6. Ashtamahabhaya Tara - Sonpara - Dacca Museum - Bangladesha



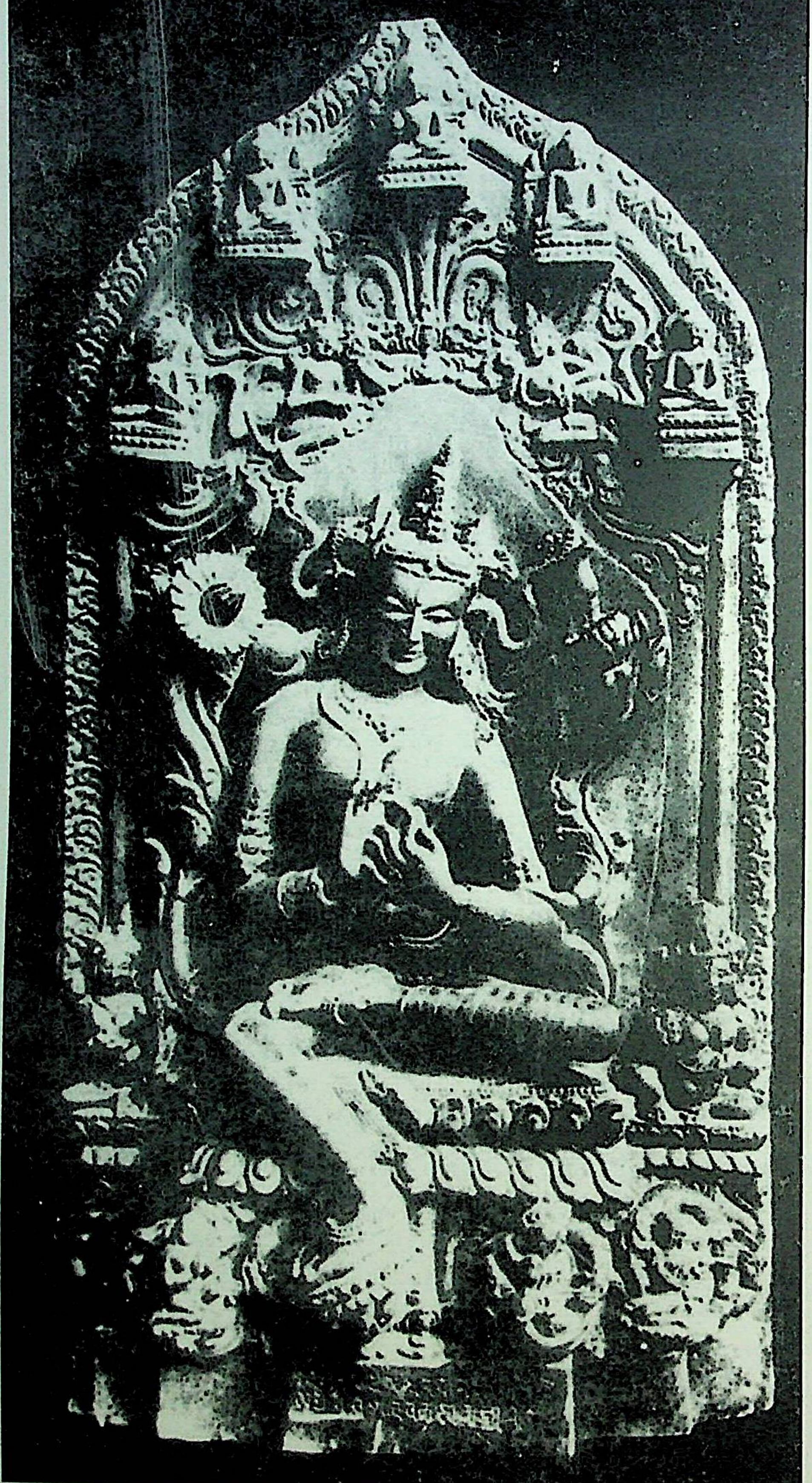
7. Simhanada Tara - Sarnath Museum



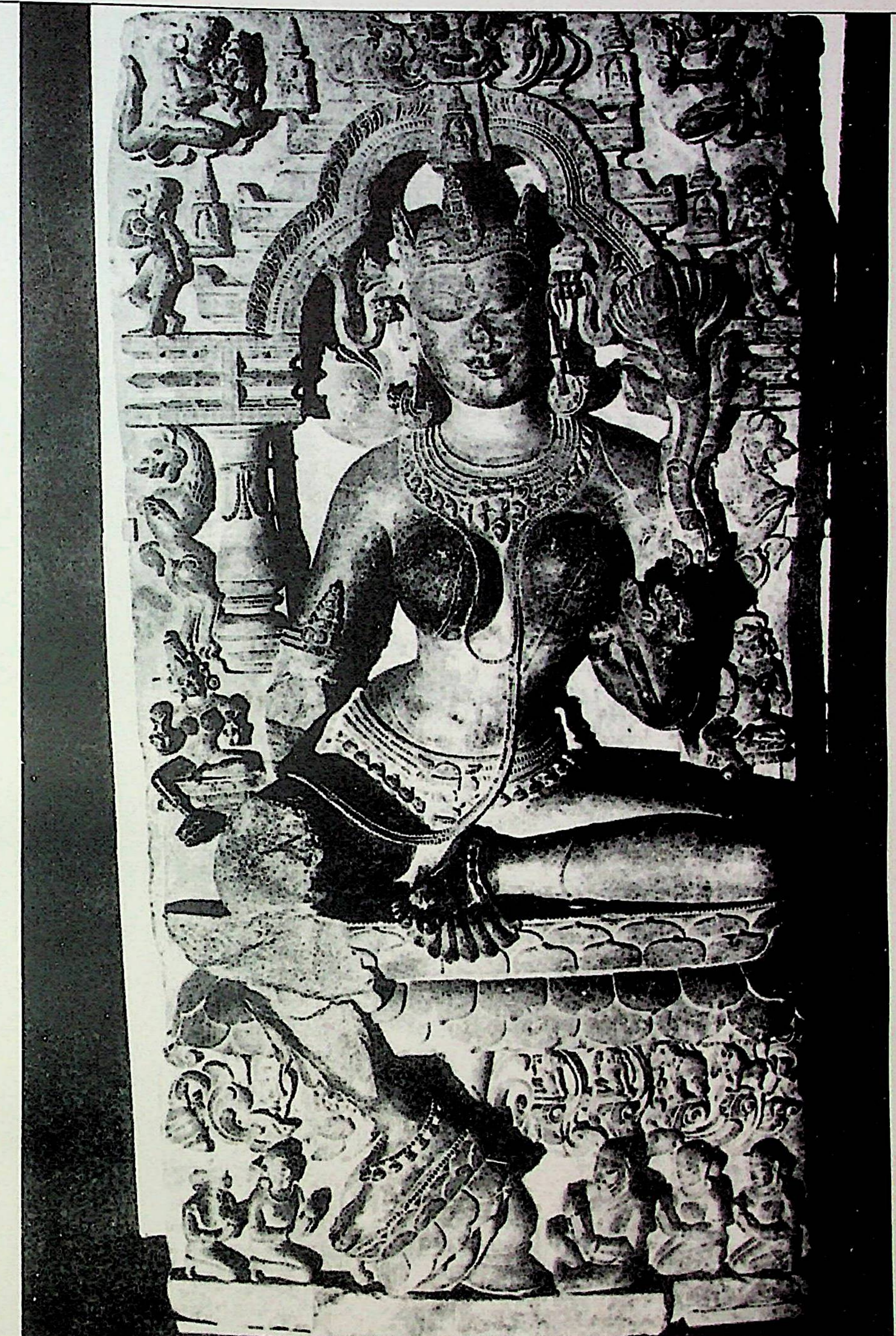
8. Durgottarani Tara - Indian Museum - Calcutta.



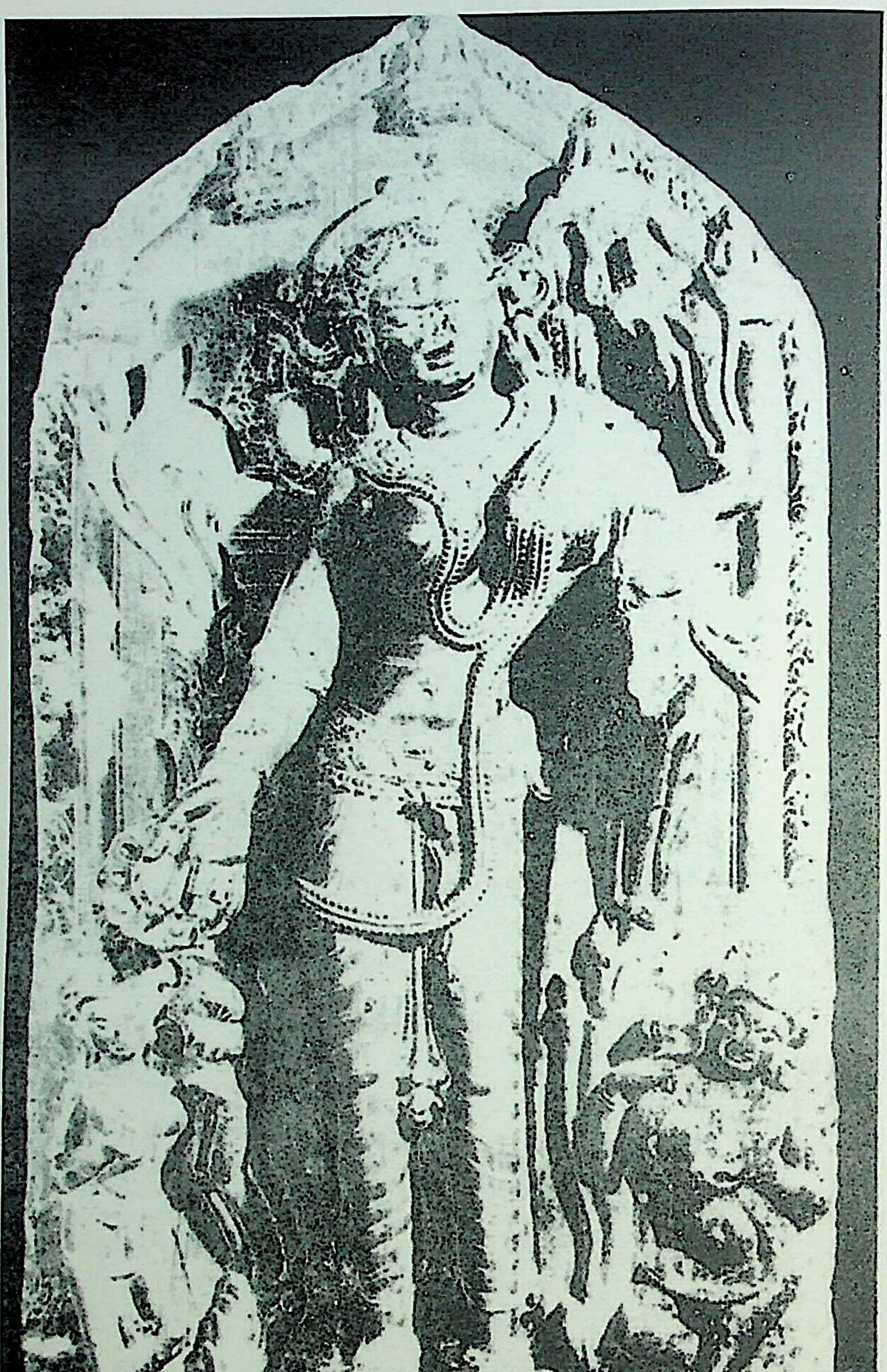
9. Durgottarani Tara - Ratnagiri (Orissa).



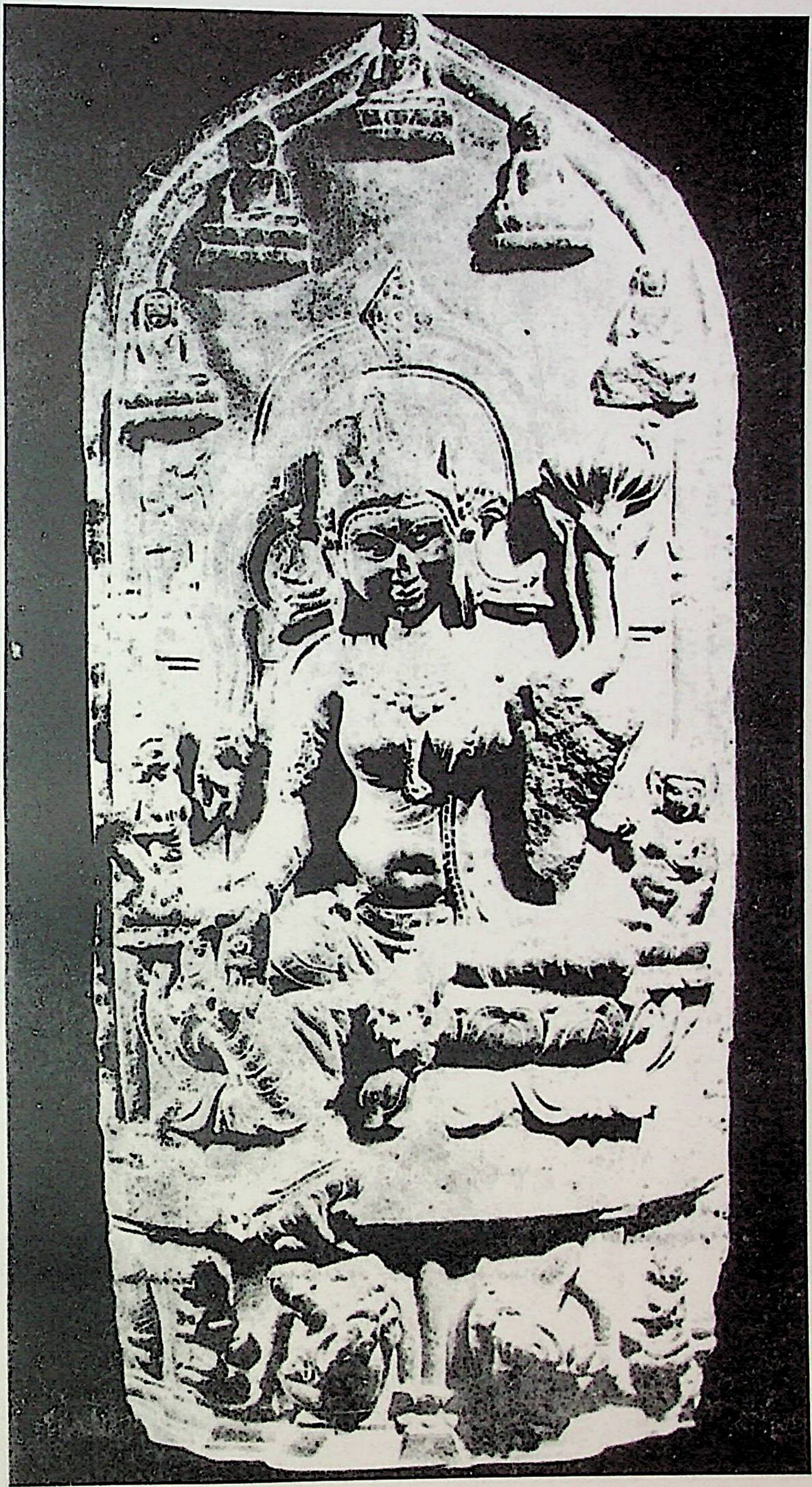
10. Mahashri - Tara - Calcutta Museum.



11. Khadiravani Tara - Patna Museum.



12. Khadiravani Tara - Indian Museum - Calcutta.



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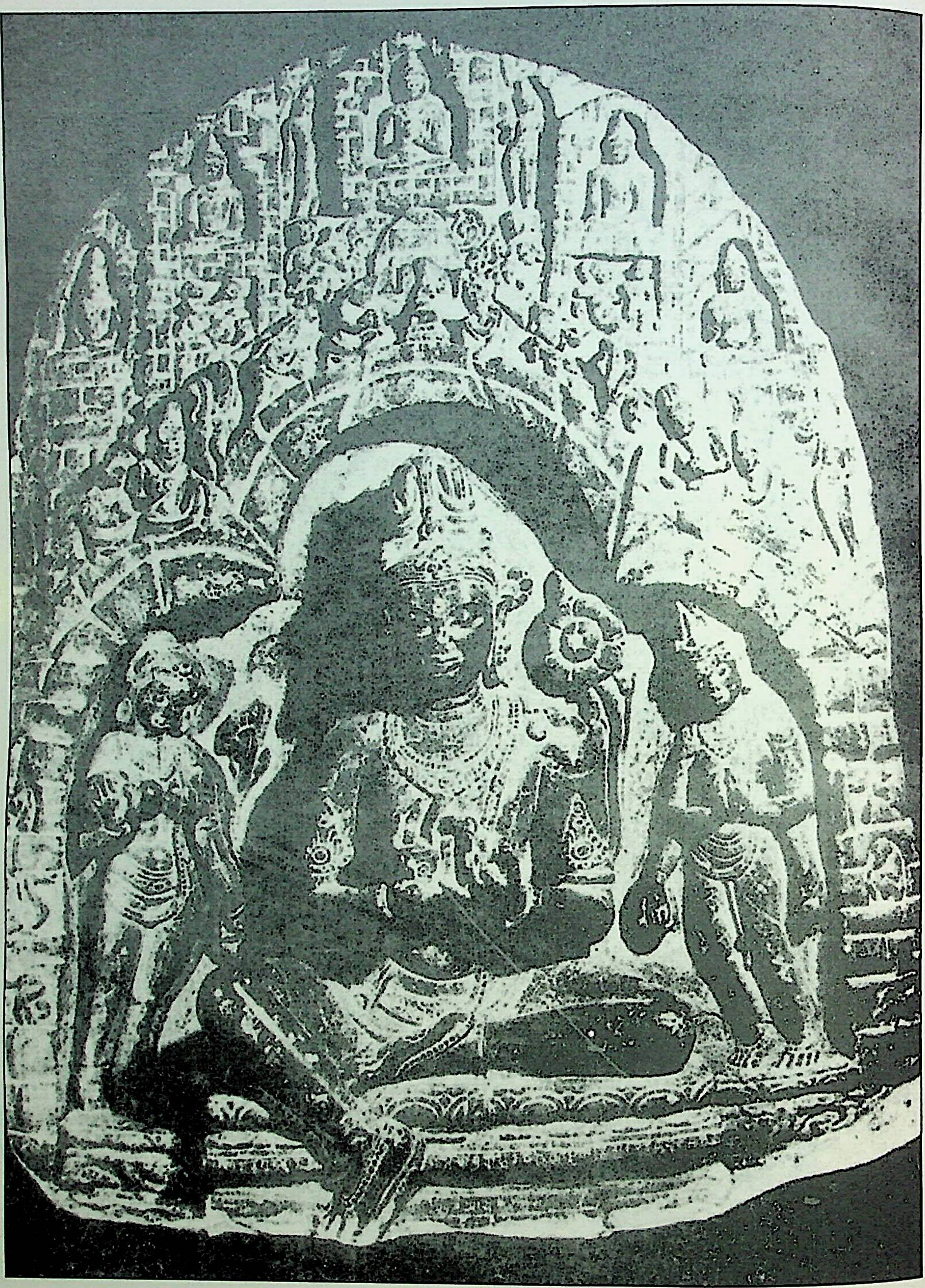
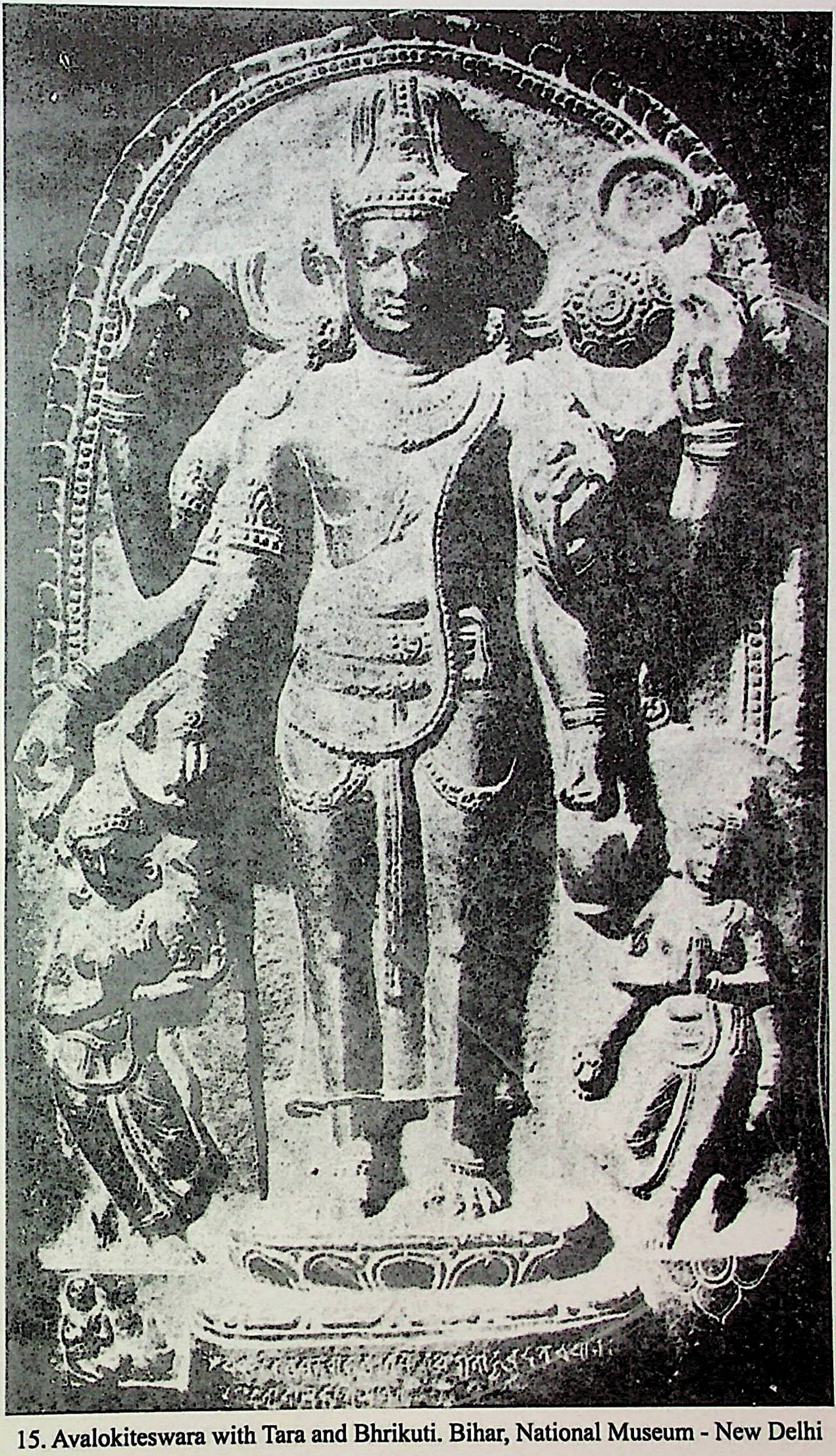
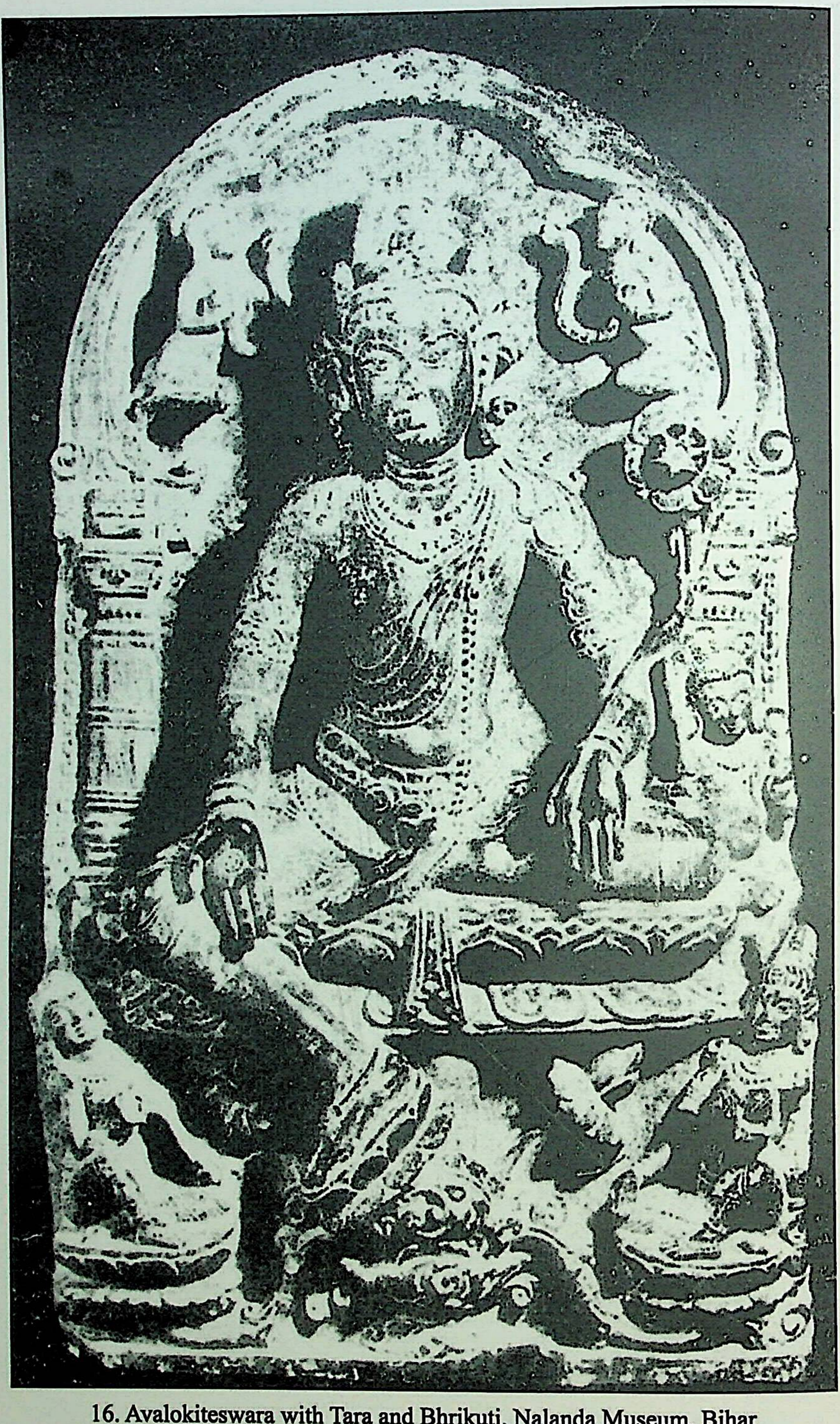


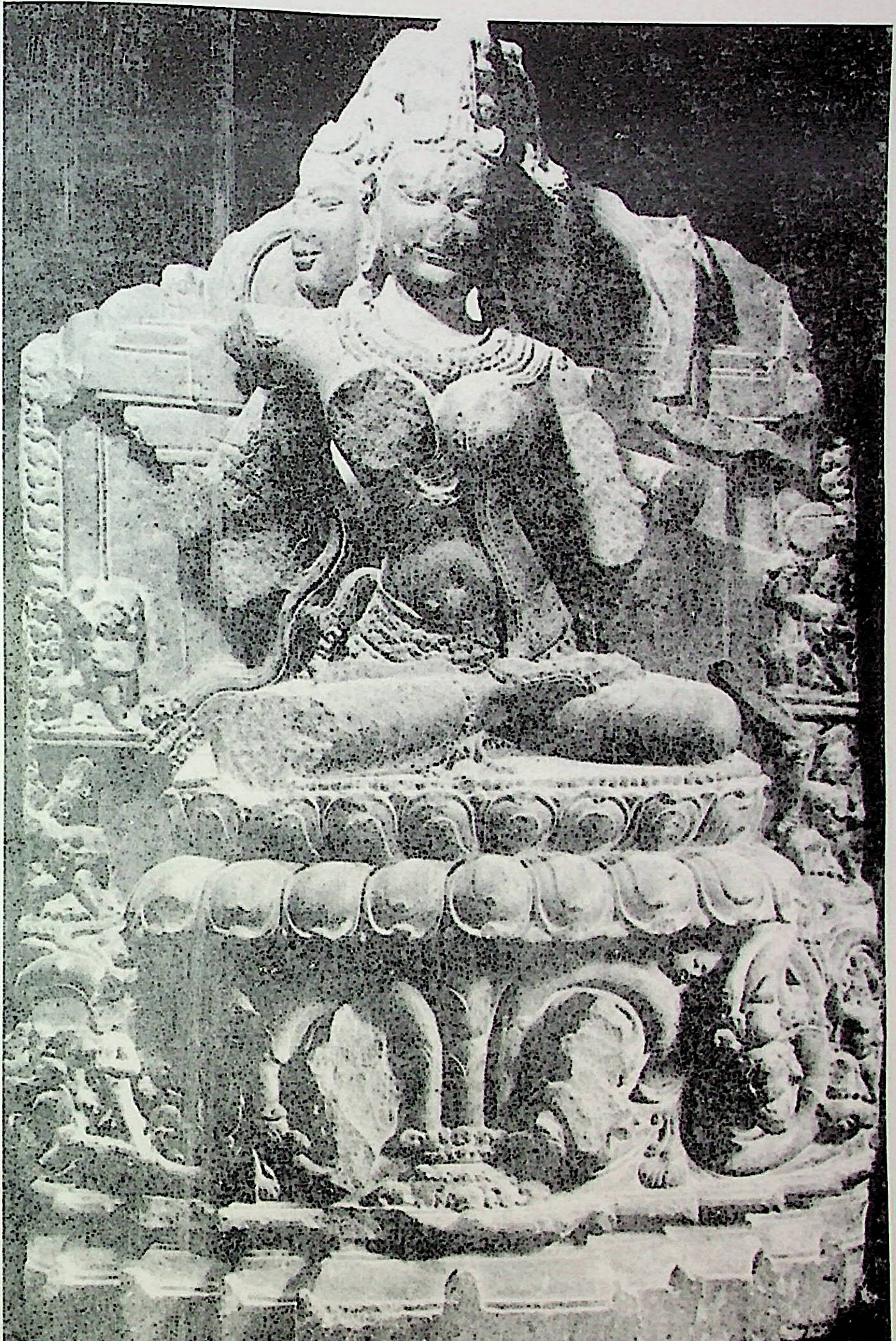
14. Avalokiteswara with Tara and Bhrikuti. (Kurkihar) Indian Museum - Calcutta.



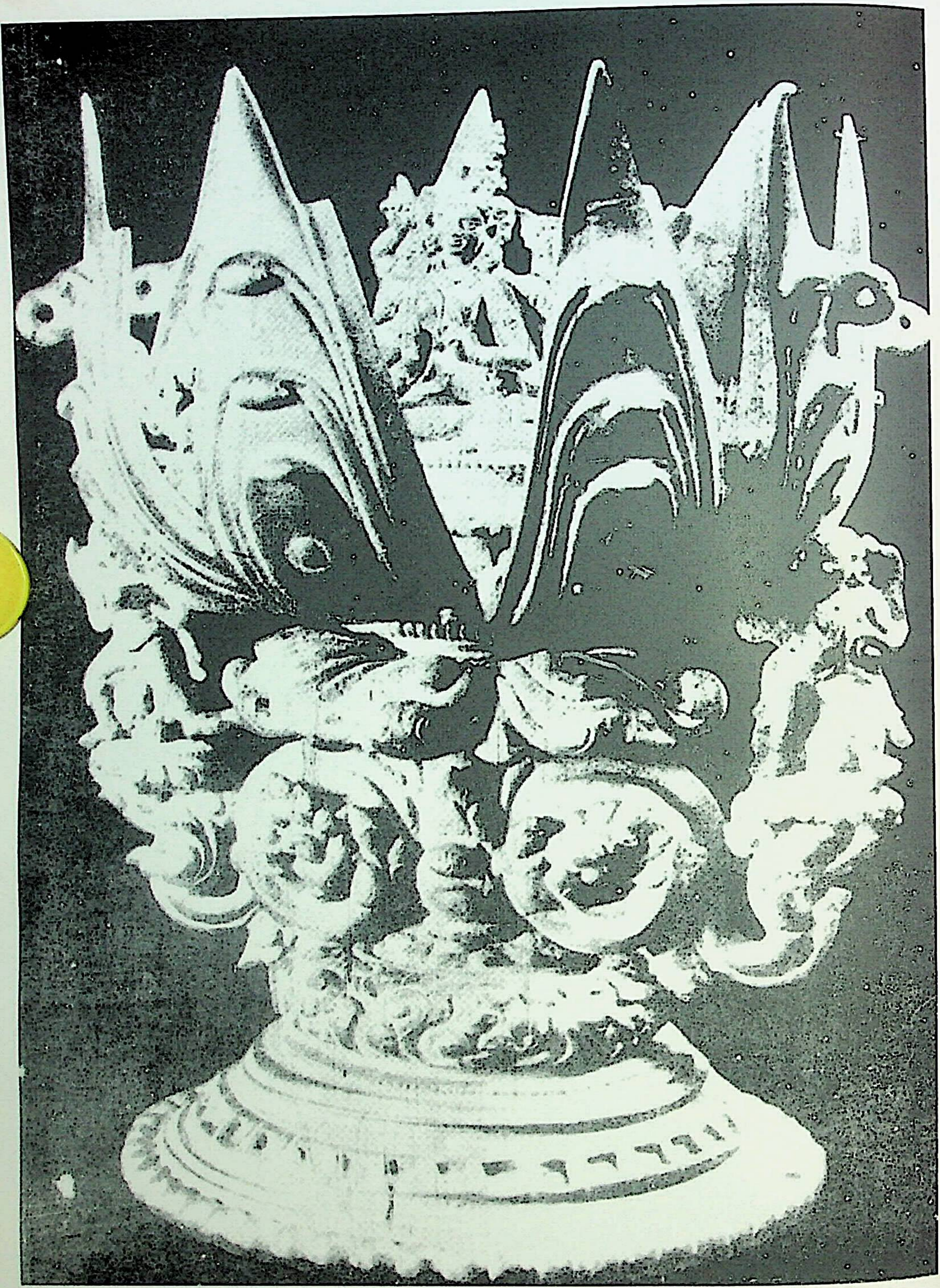
15. Avalokiteswara with Tara and Bhrikuti. Bihar, National Museum - New Delhi



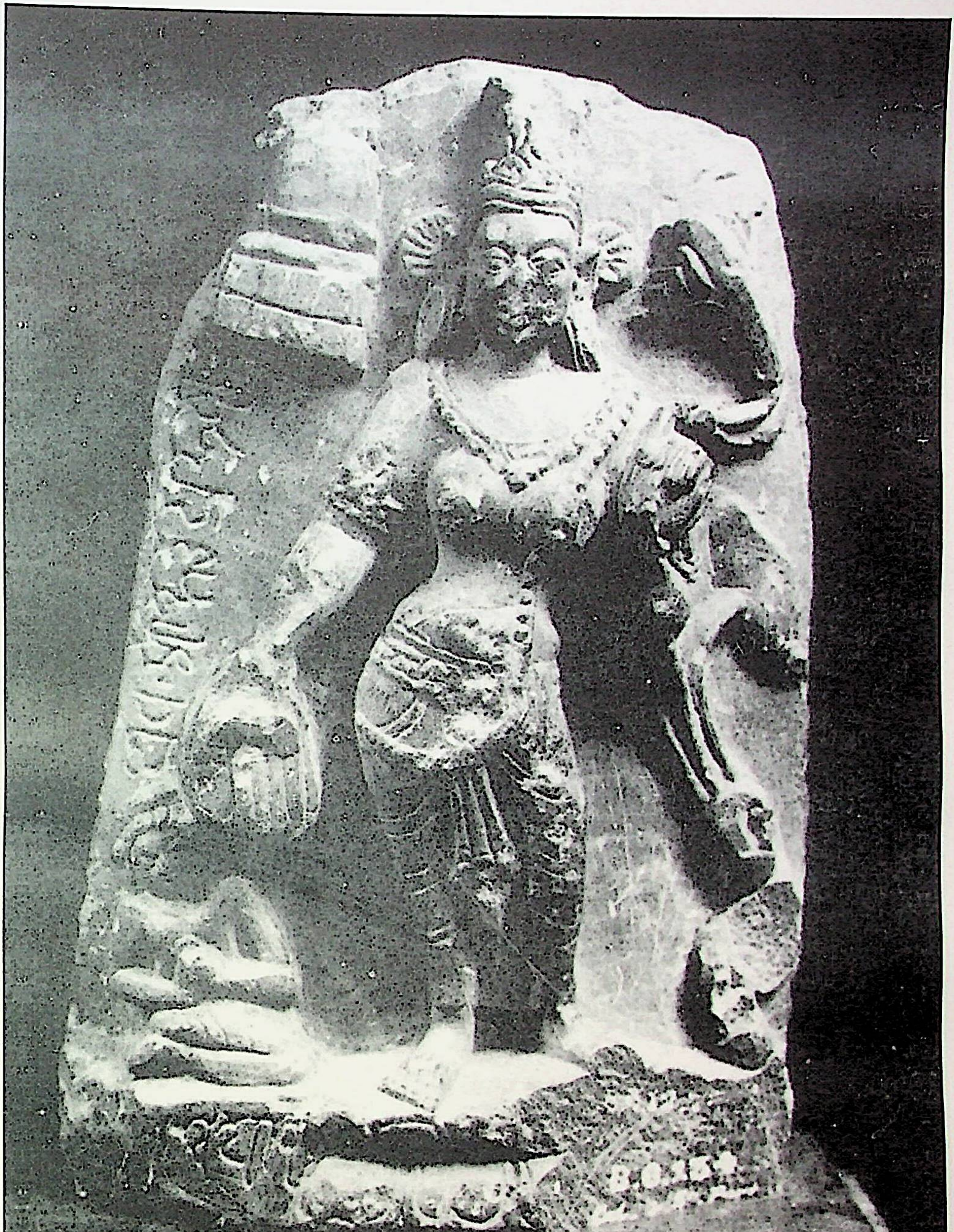
16. Avalokiteswara with Tara and Bhrikuti. Nalanda Museum, Bihar



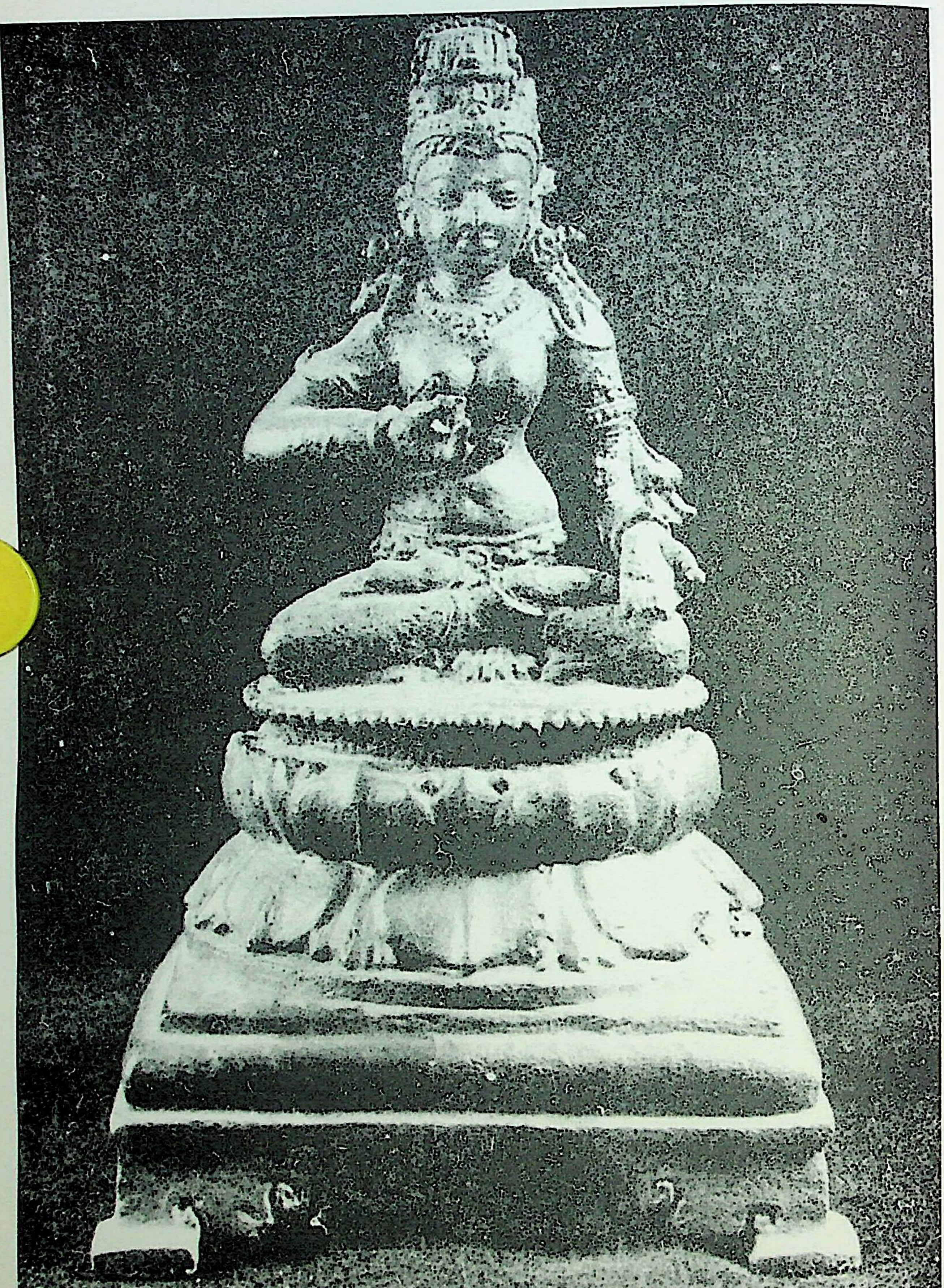
17. Vajra Tara - Archeological Museum - Calcutta.



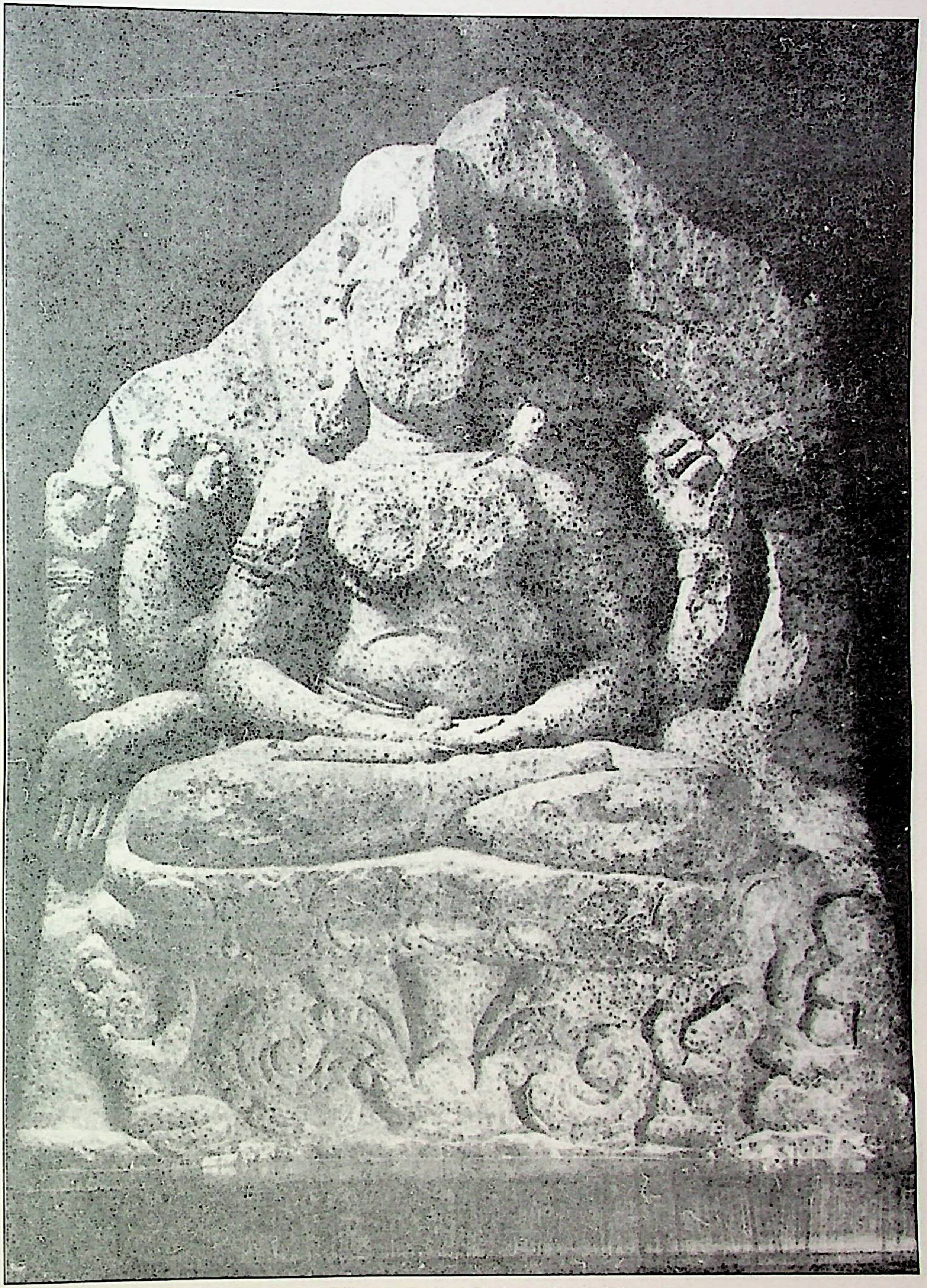
18. Lotus (open) with mandala of Vajra Tara. Indian Museum - Calcutta.



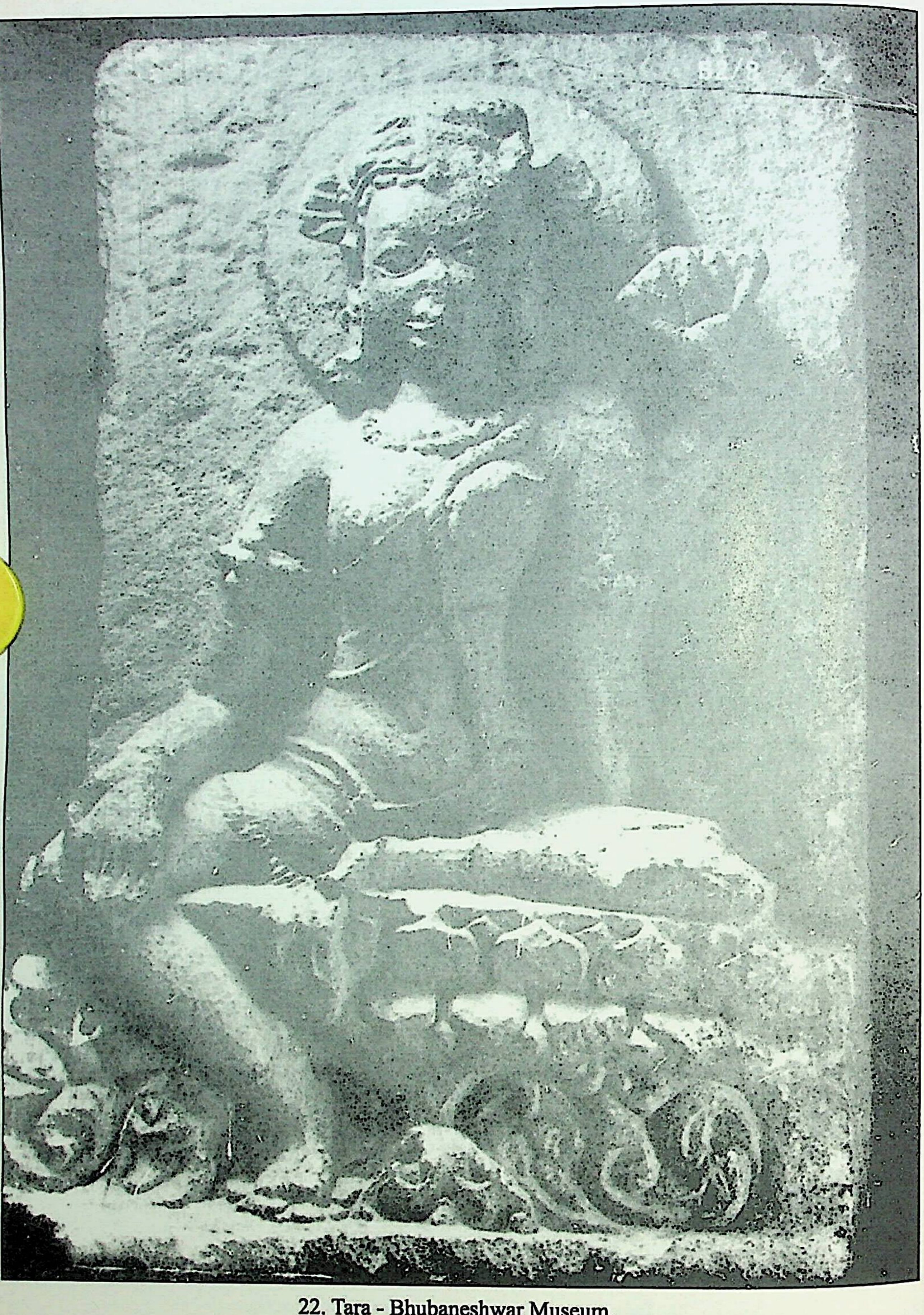
19. Standing Tara-Baudhgaya Indian Museum - Calcutta



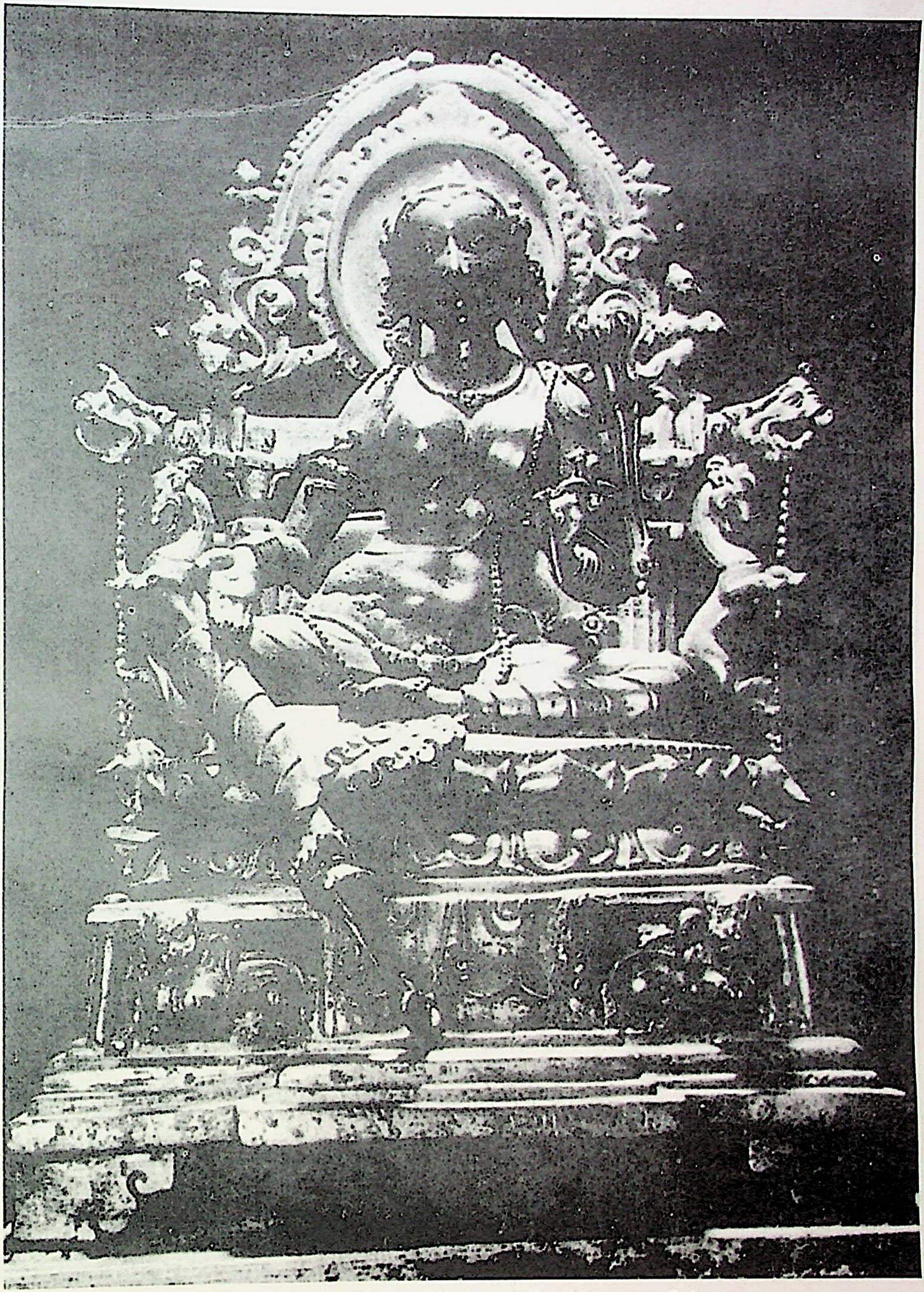
20. Tara - Nalanda Museum



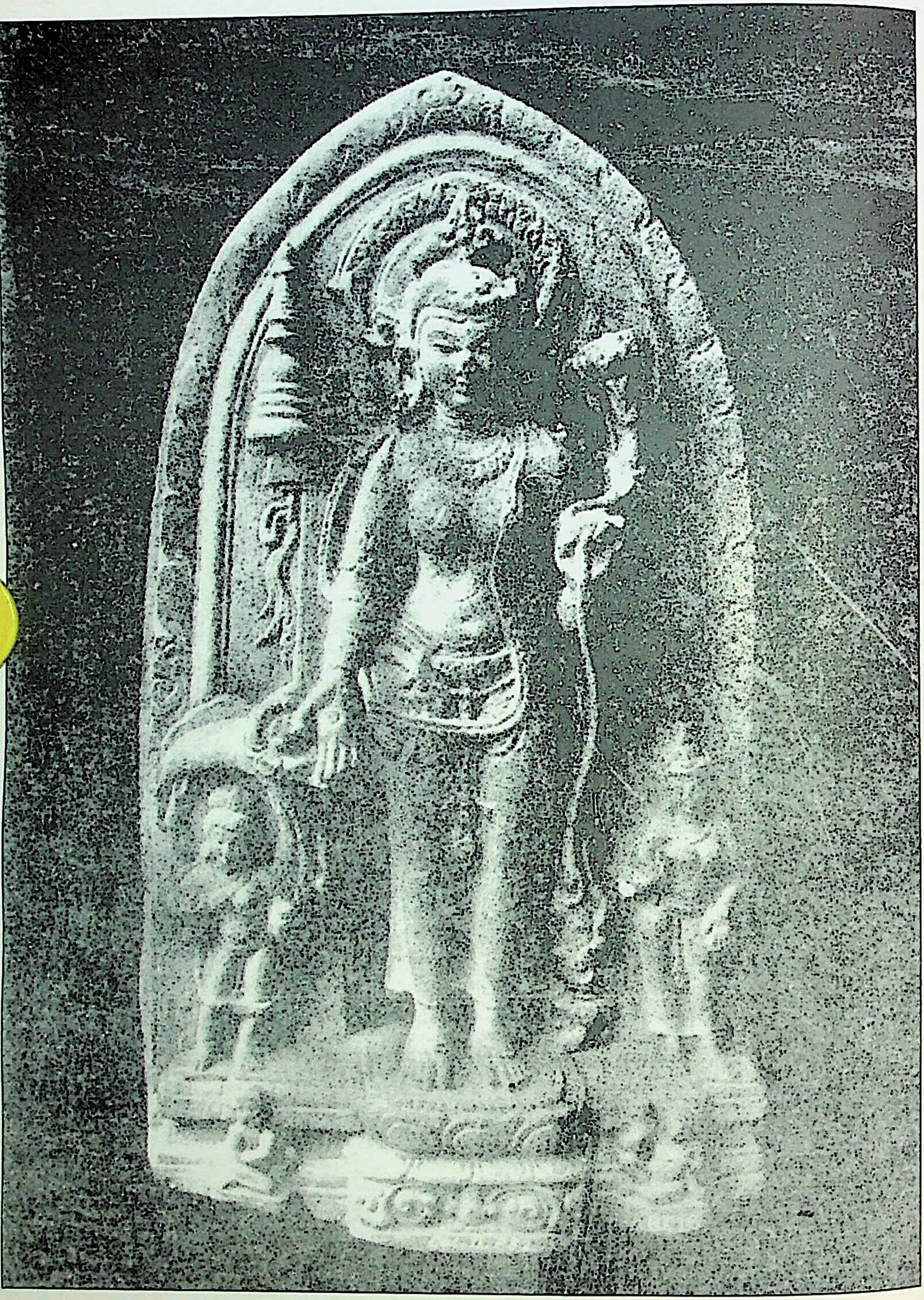
21. Tara - 7th cent A.D. - Bhubaneshwar Museum.



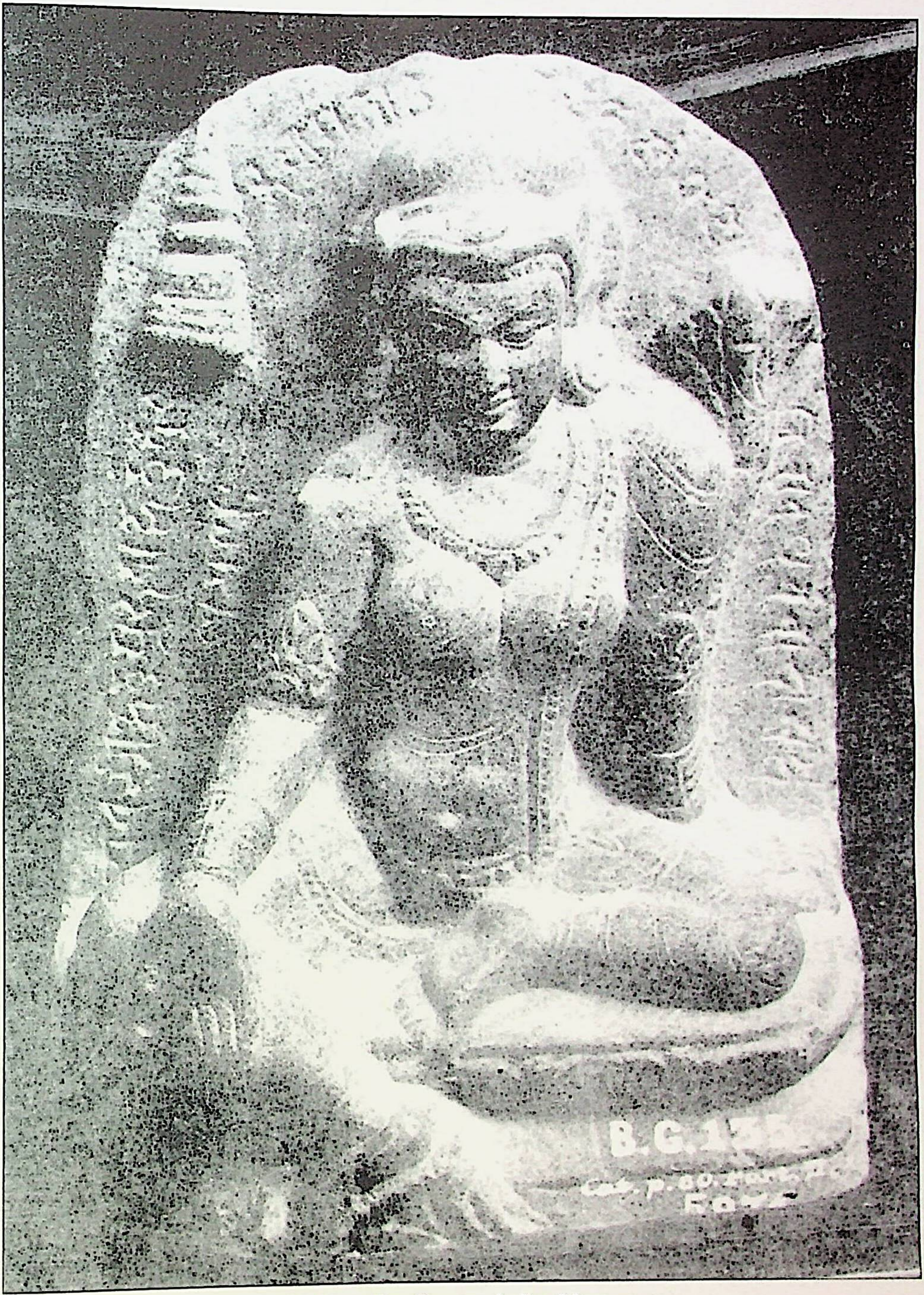
22. Tara - Bhubaneshwar Museum.



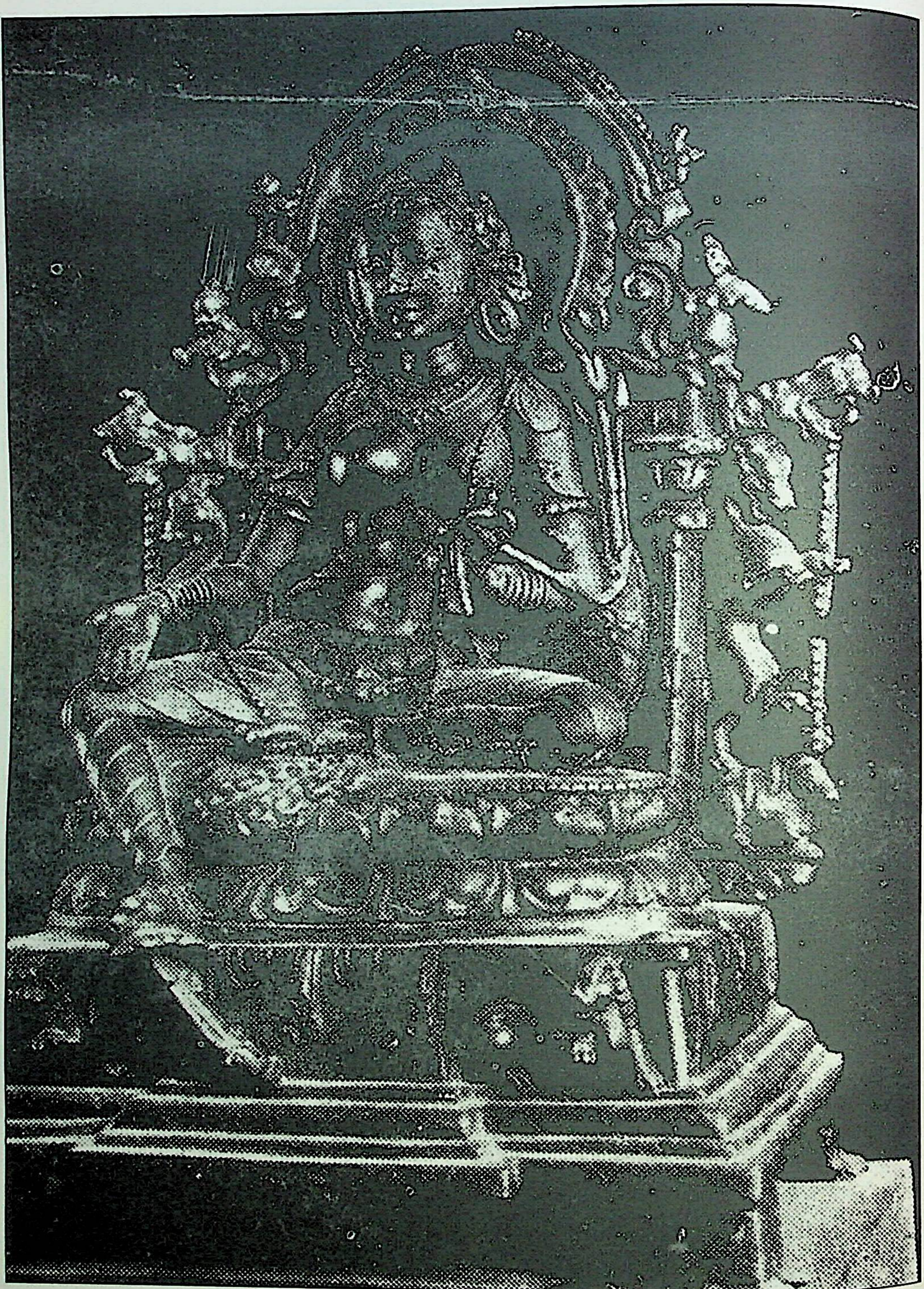
23. Shyama Tara - 9th cent. (Patna) Indian Museum - Calcutta.



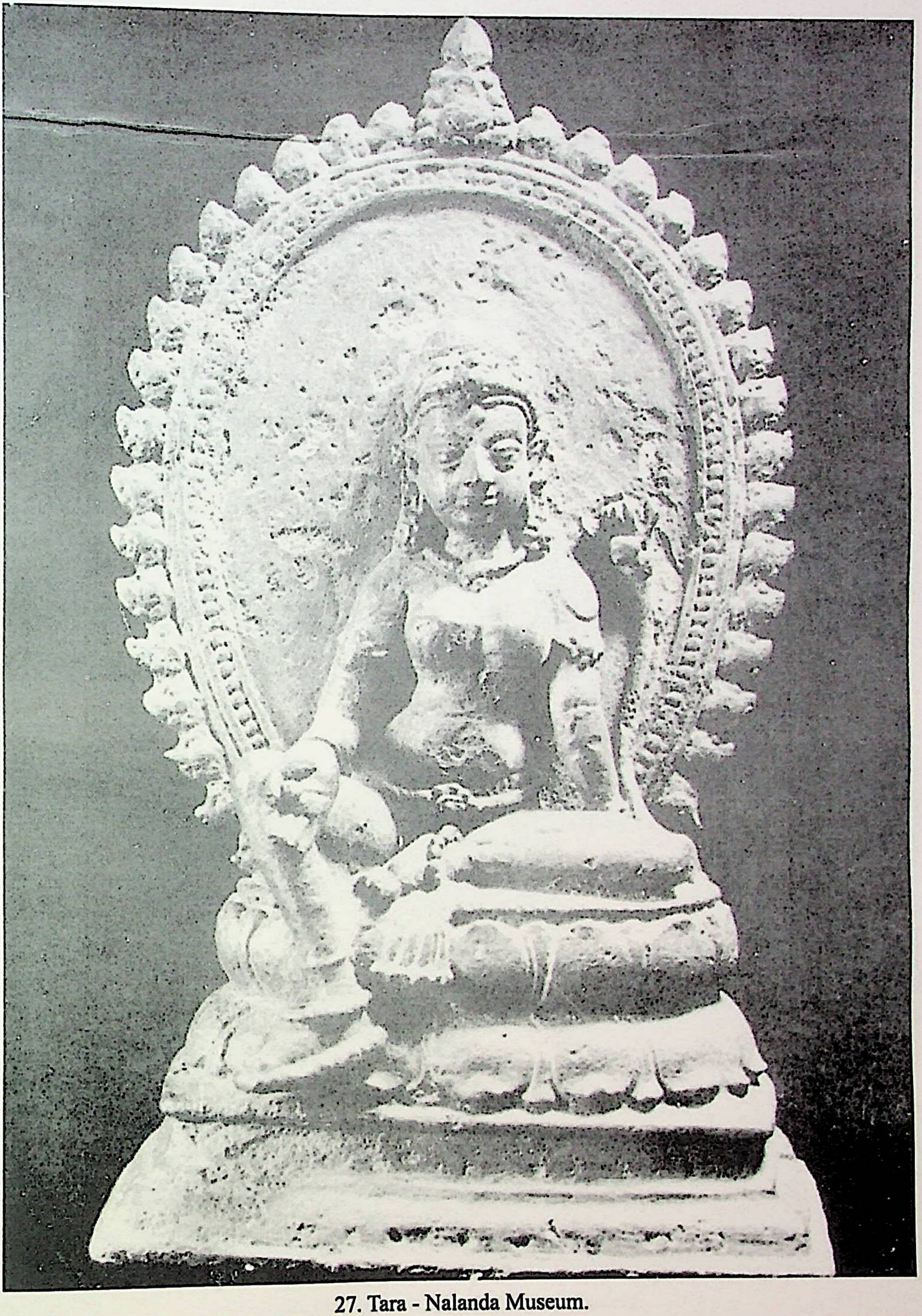
24. Tara - standing - stone - Bihar, 9th cent. A.D.



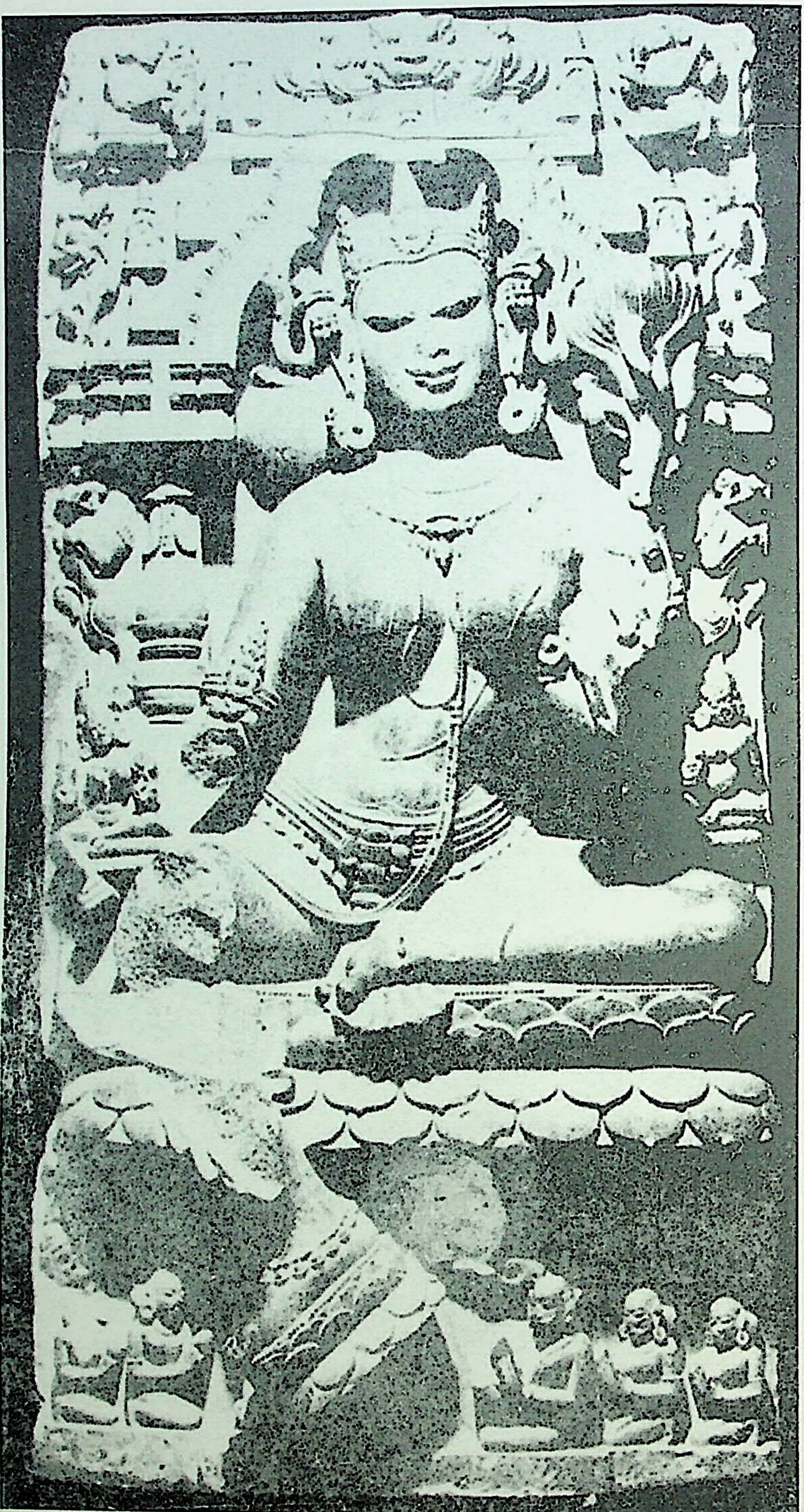
25. Tara - Baudhgaya - Indian Museum.



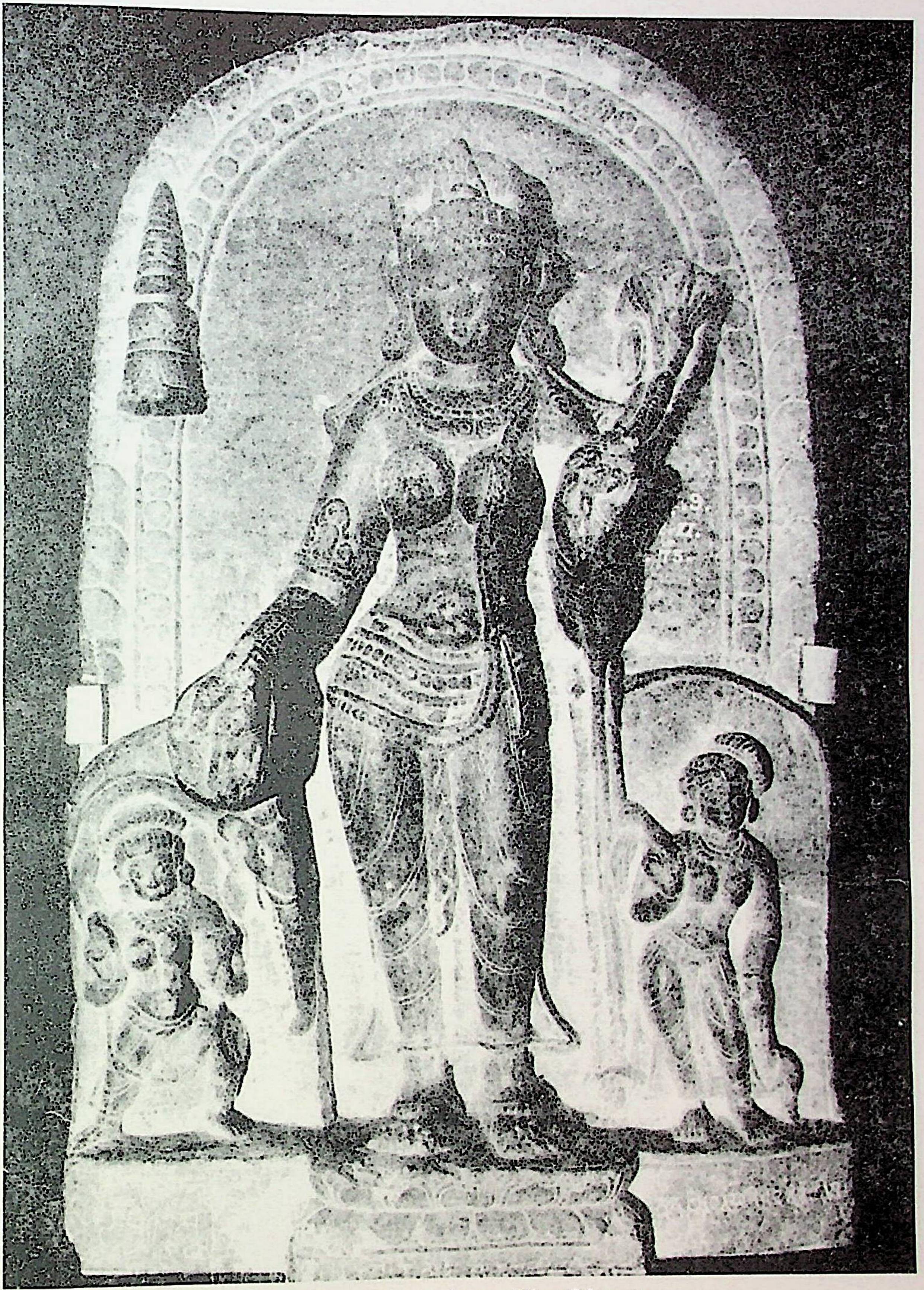
26. Tara in Lalitasana - Kurkihar - Gaya.



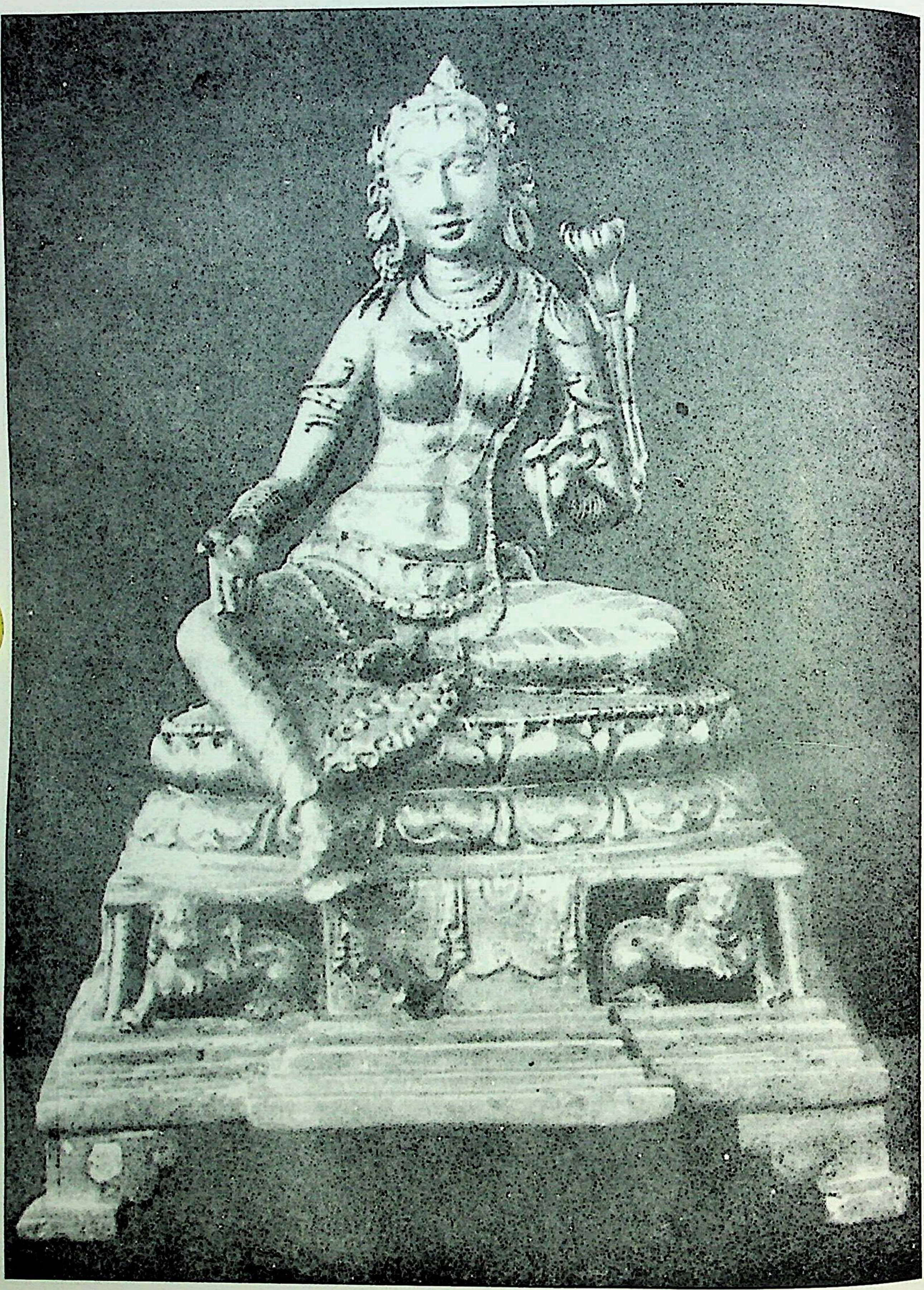
27. Tara - Nalanda Museum.



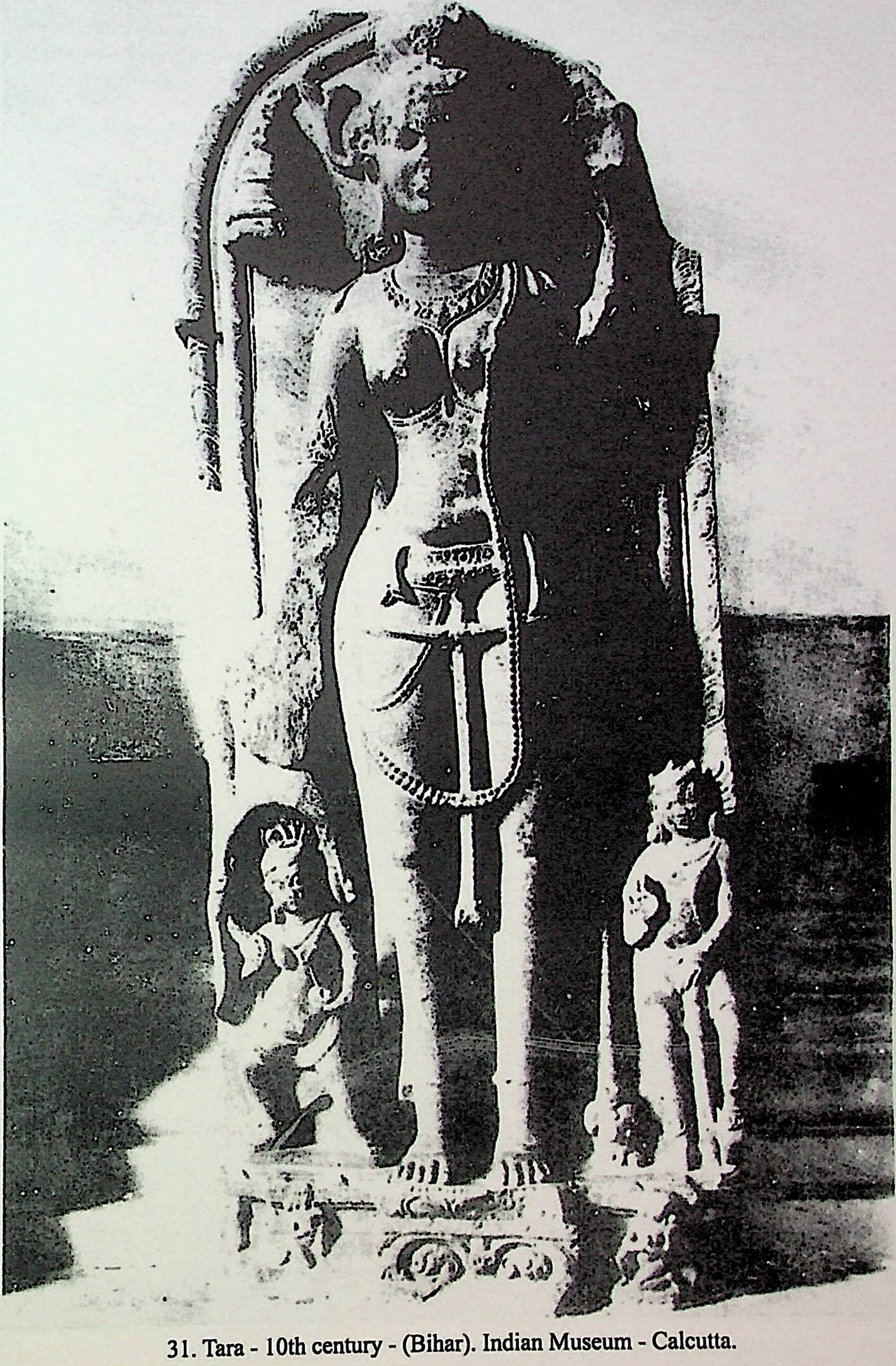
28. Tara - 9th cent. (Kurkihar).



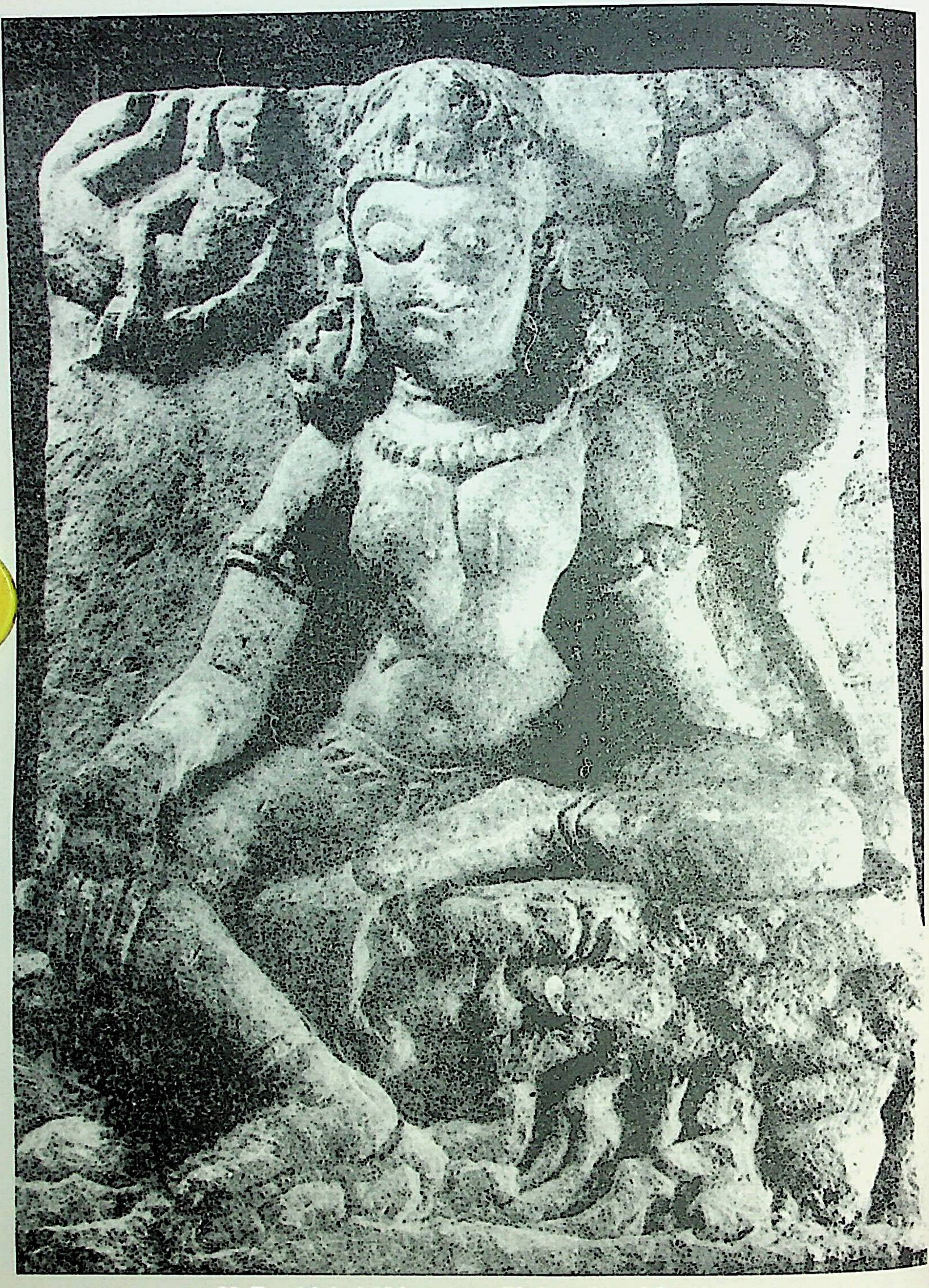
29. Tara with attendants - Bihar. 9th cent.



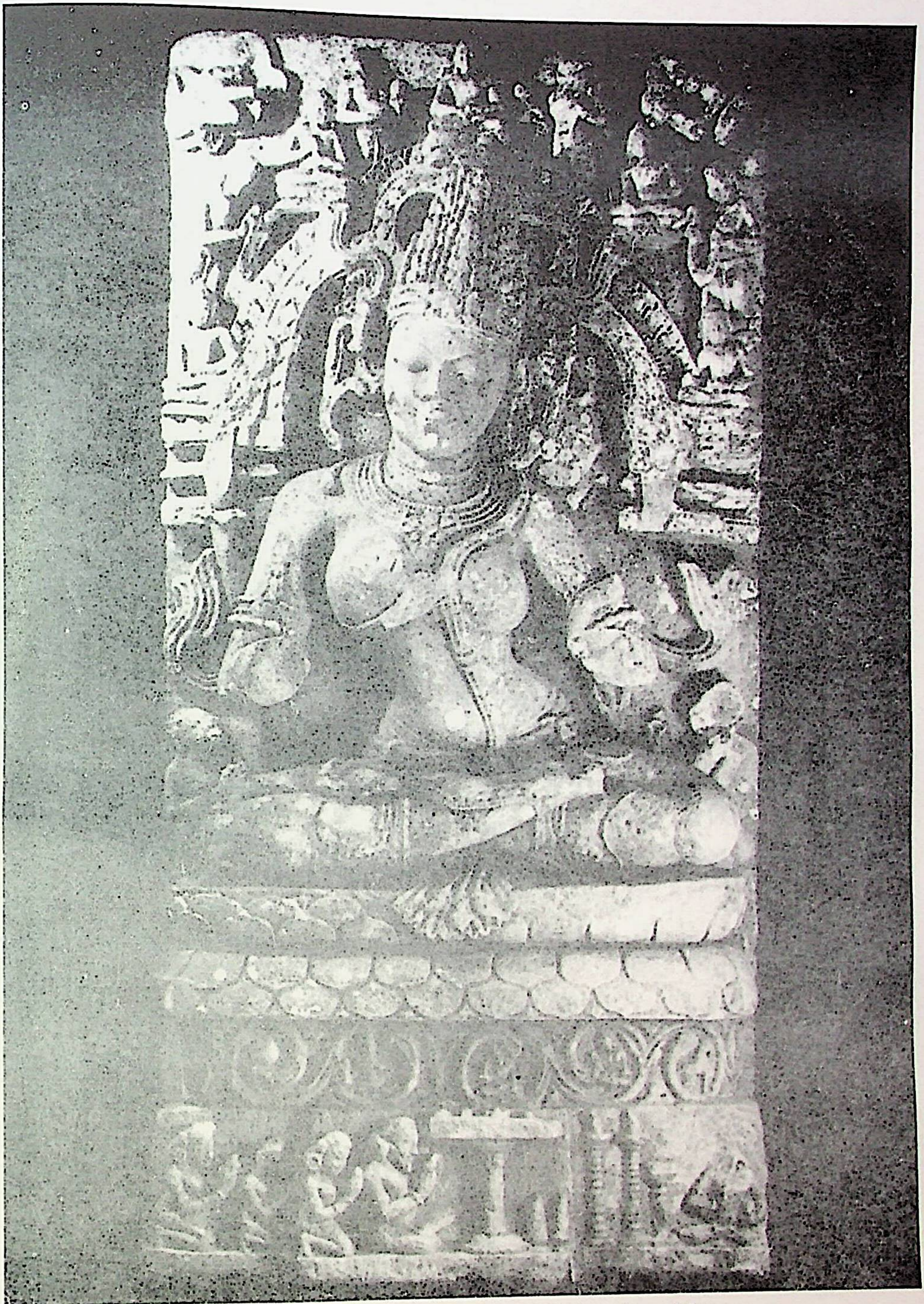
30. Shyam Tara - Bihar. 9th cent.



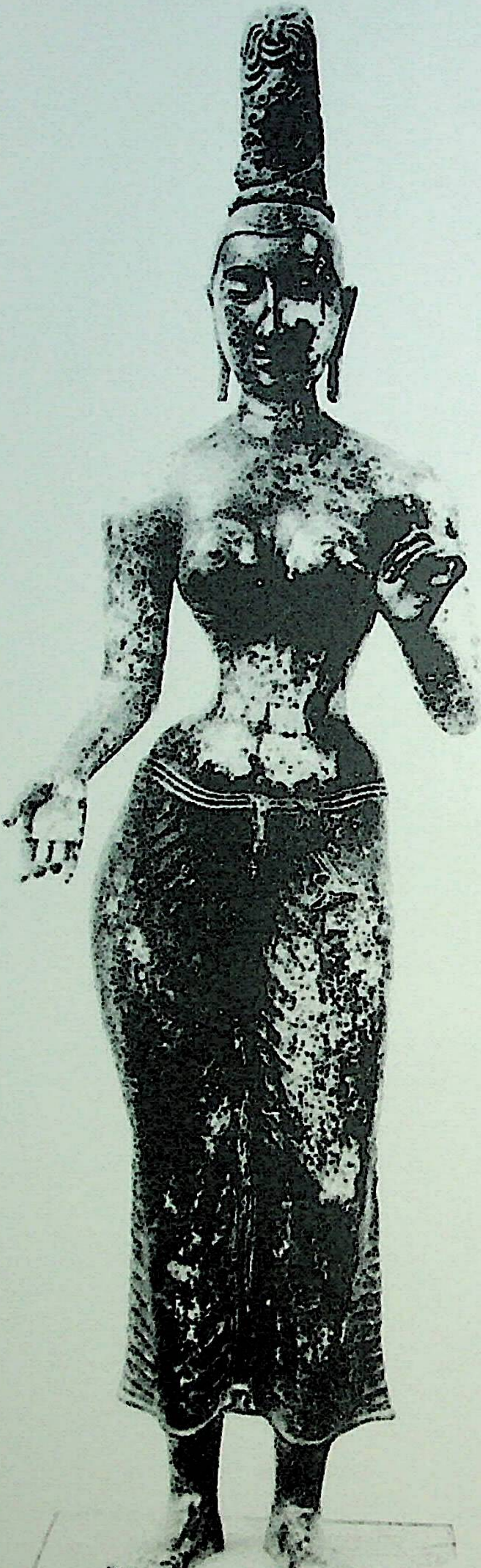
31. Tara - 10th century - (Bihar). Indian Museum - Calcutta.



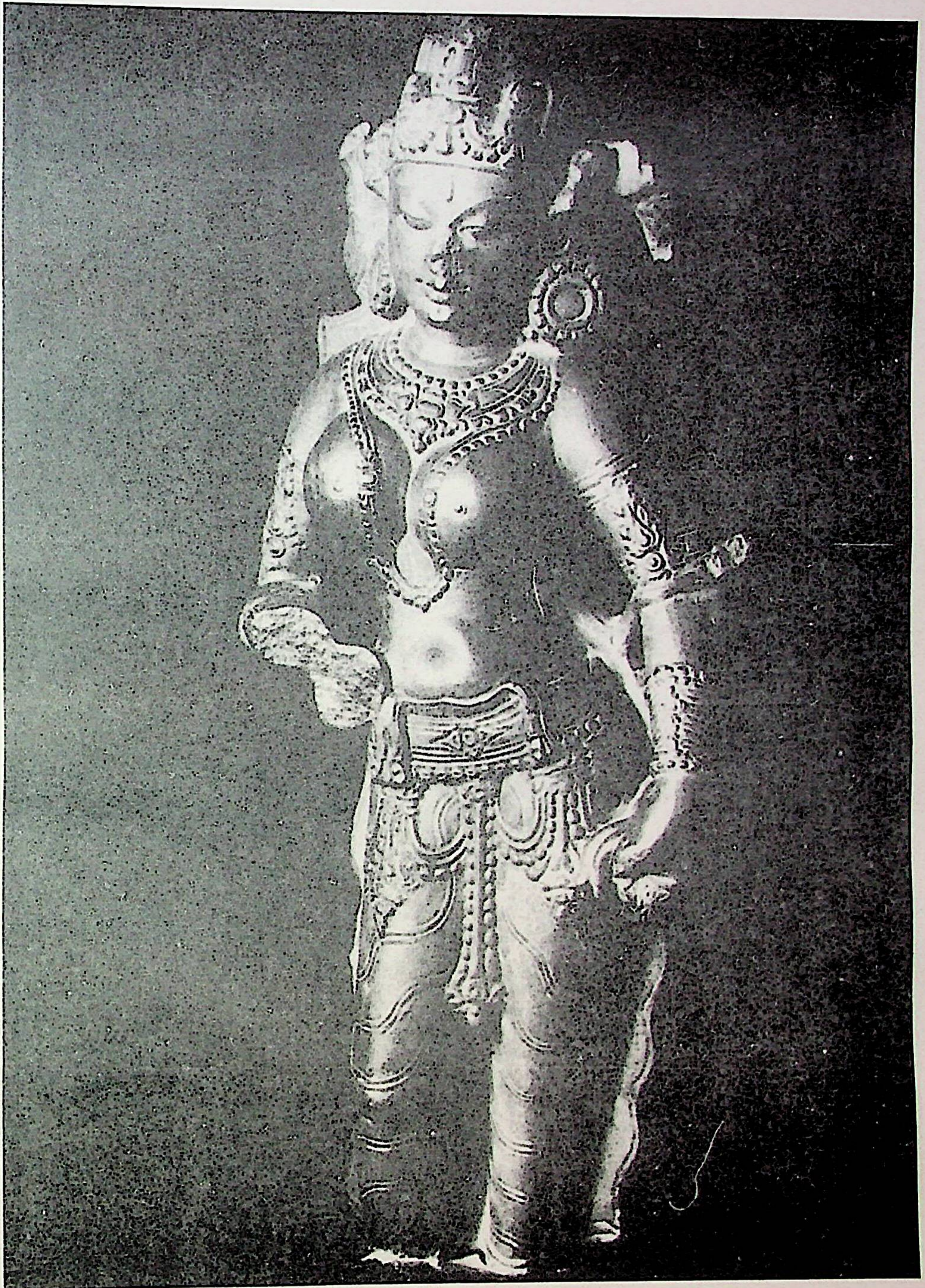
32. Tara (sitting) 10th century - Bhubaneshwar Museum.



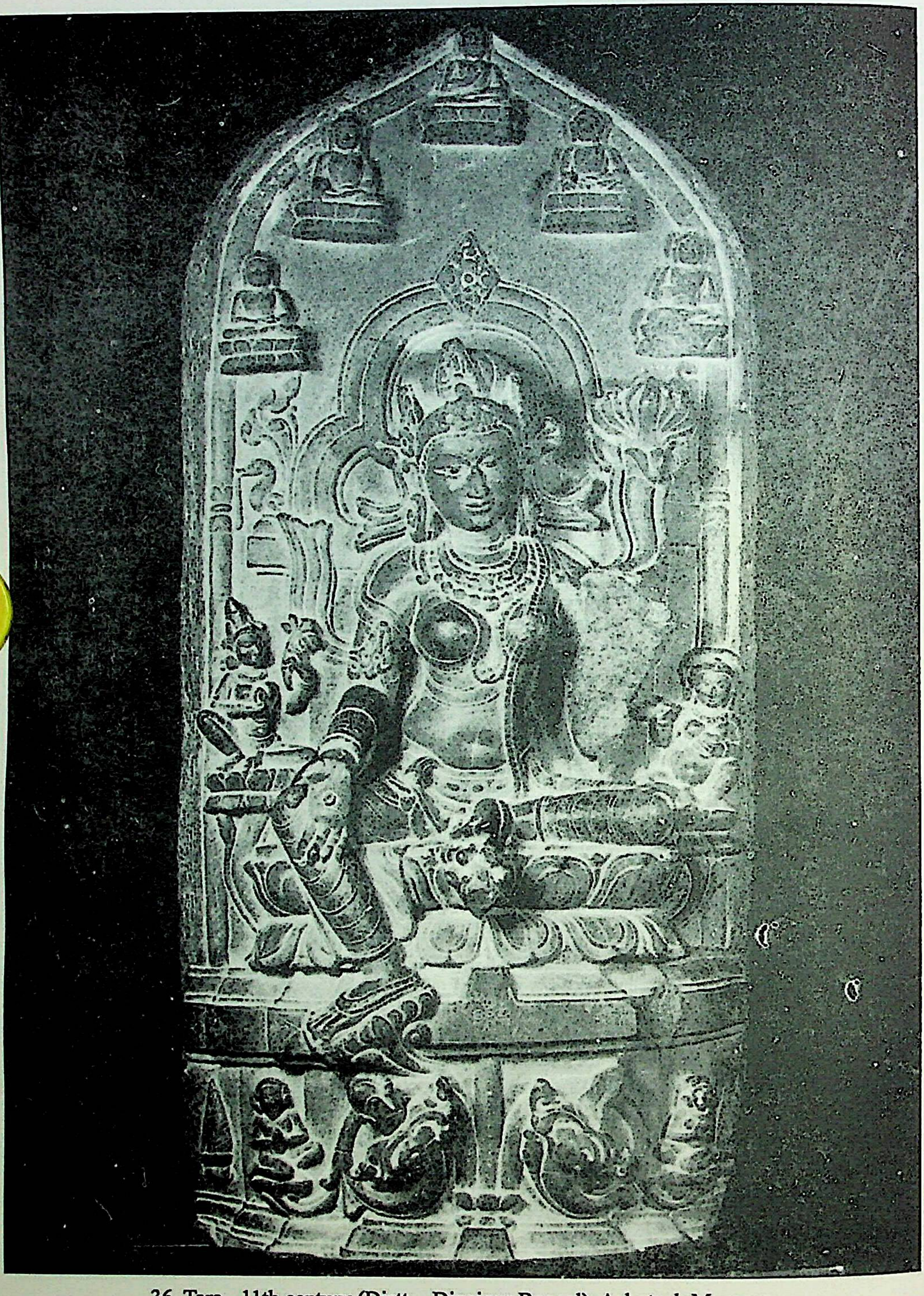
33. Tara (in Padmasana) 10th century - Bhubaneshwar Museum.



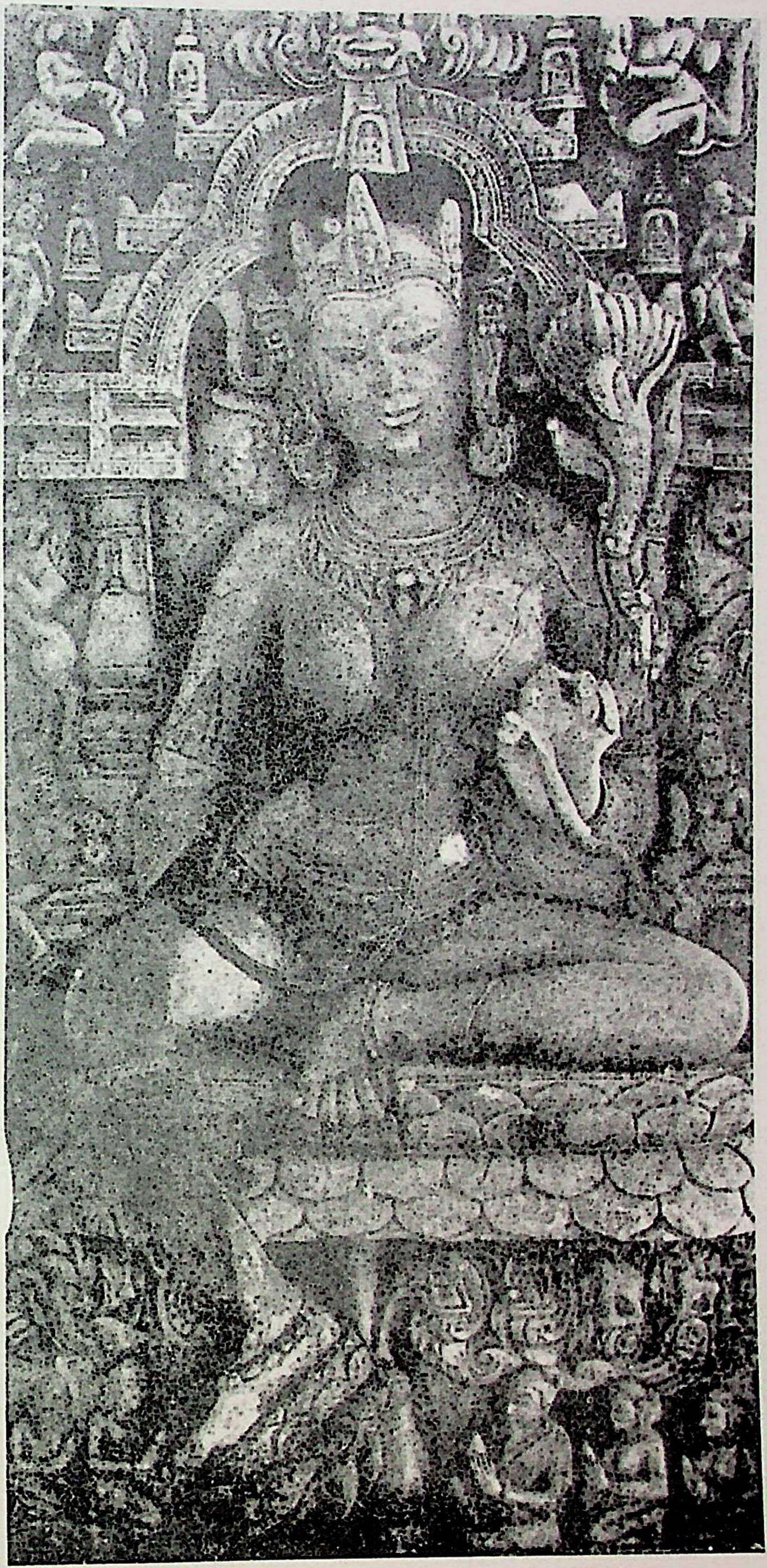
34. Tara - or Pappini (ceylon) 10th cent. British Musuem - London.



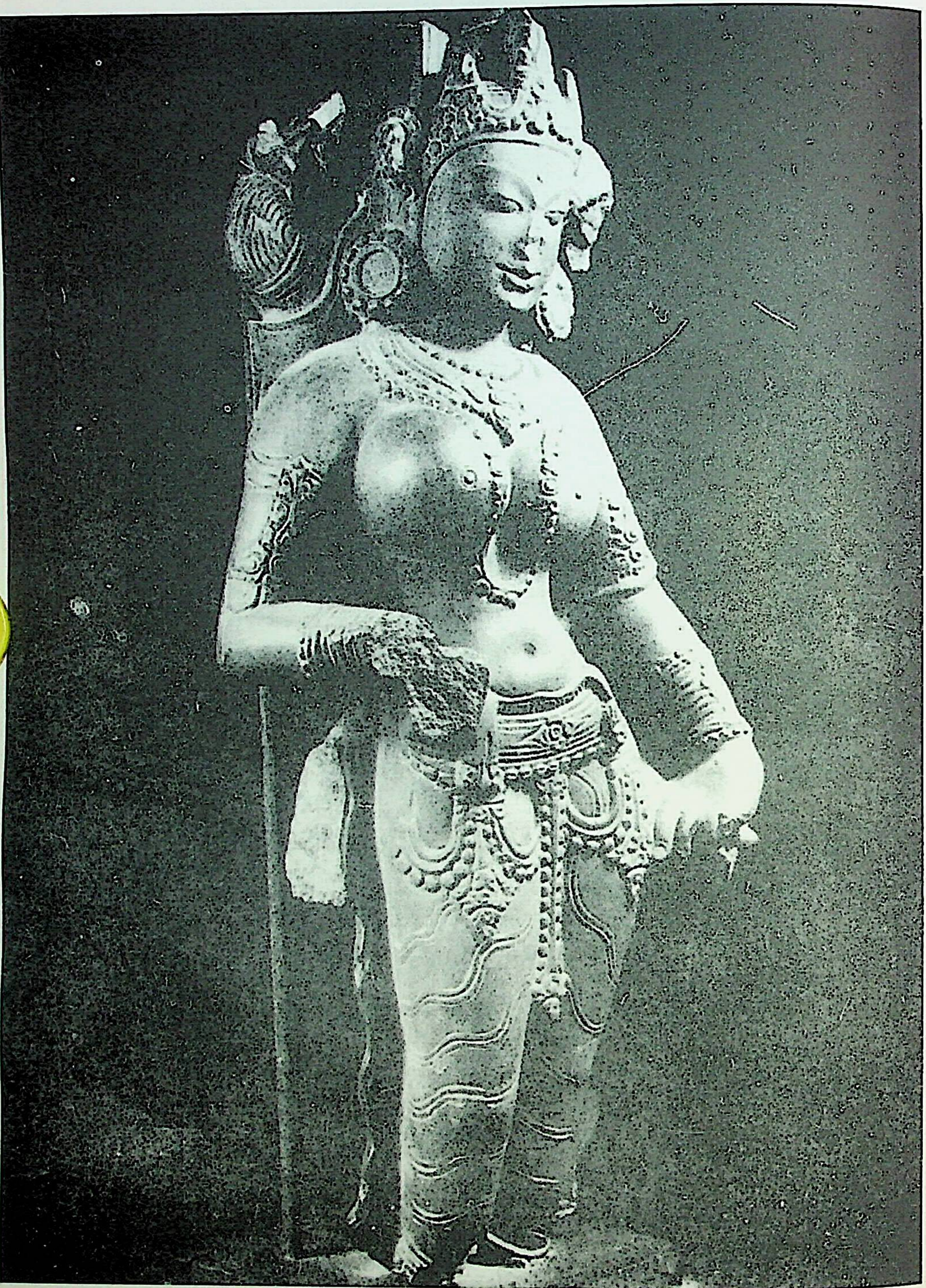
35. Tara - 11th century. Ashutosh Museum - Calcutta.



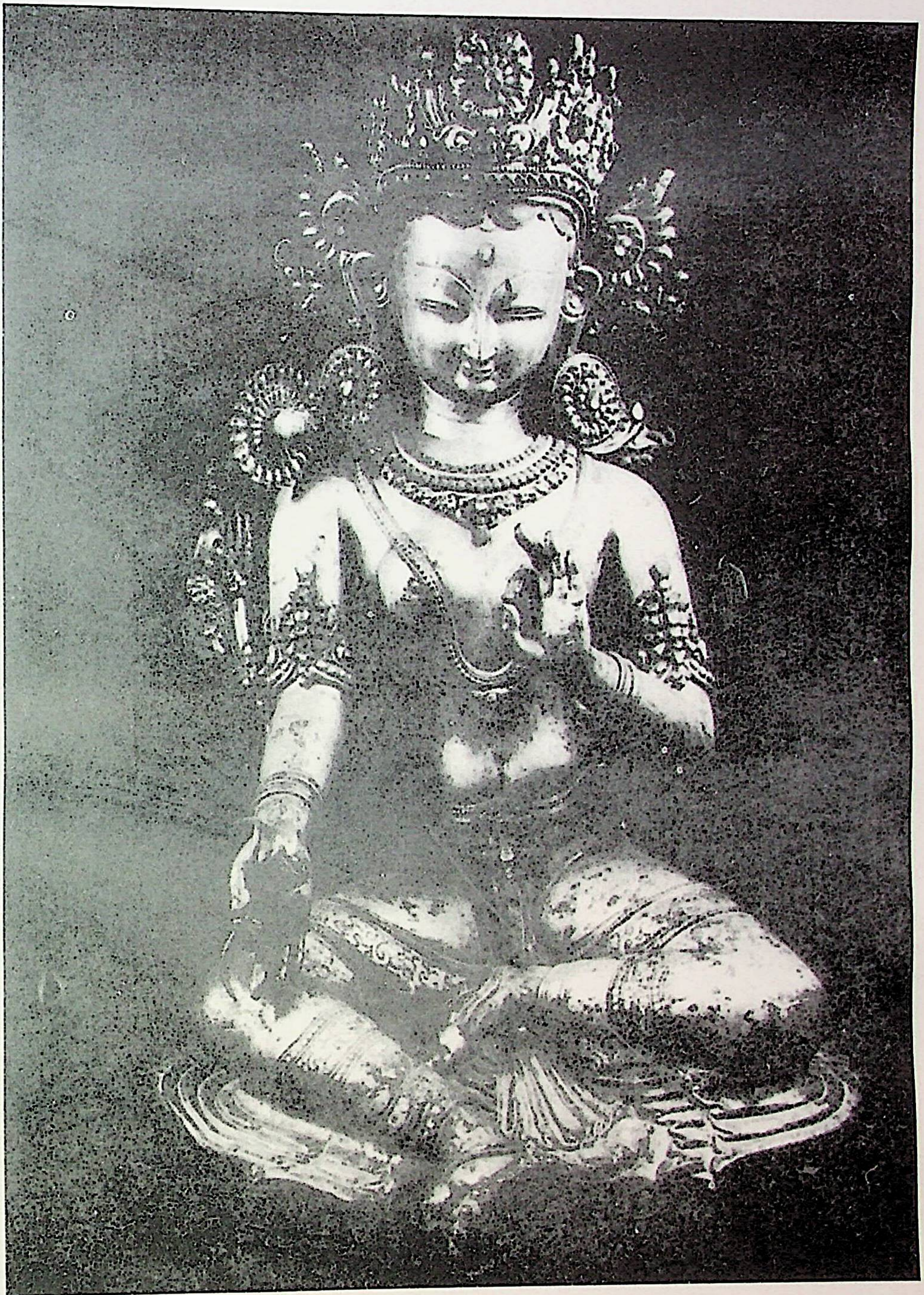
36. Tara - 11th century (Distt. - Dinajpur Bengal). Ashutosh Museum



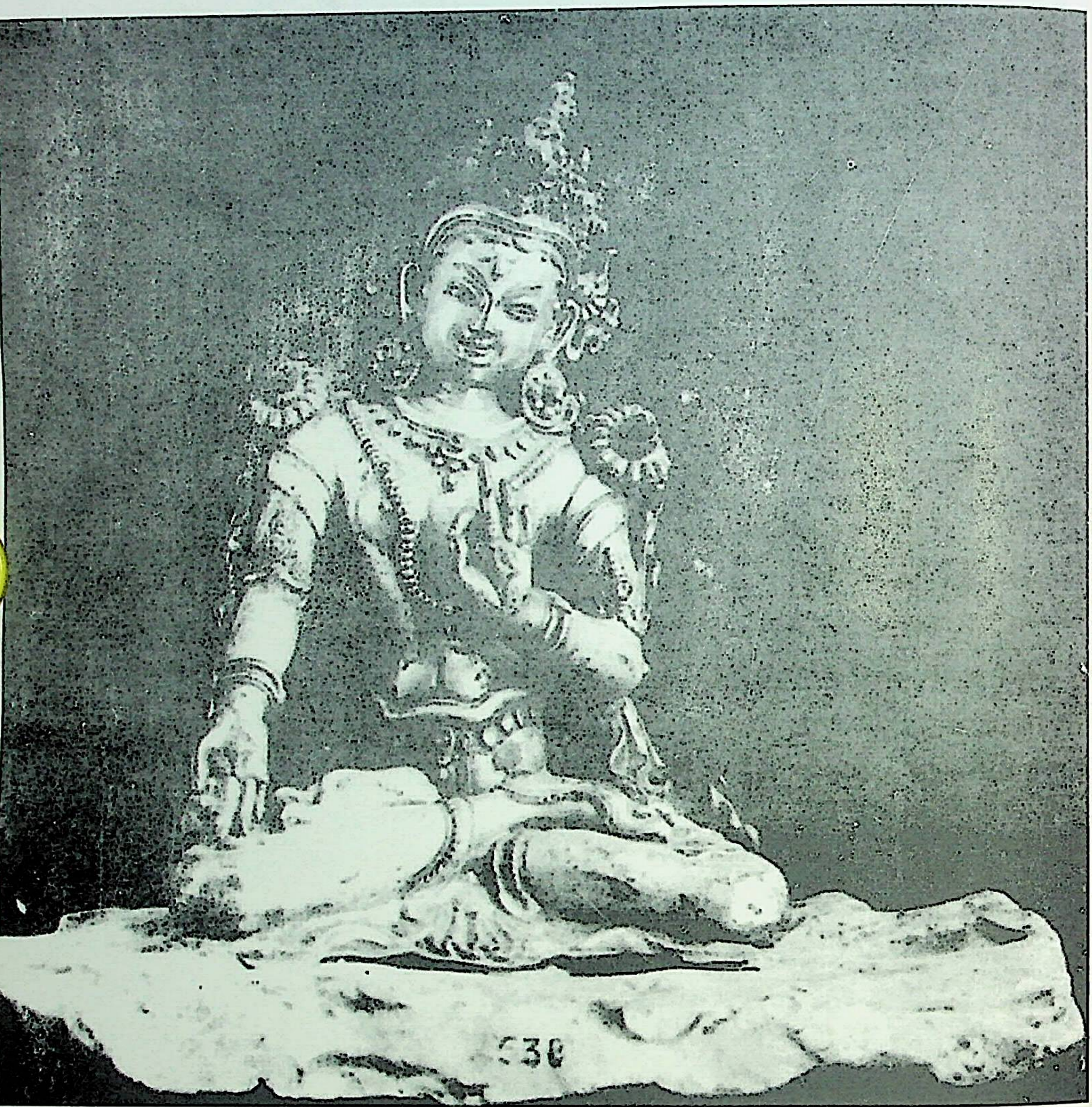
37. Khadiravani Tara - Buddha jayanti exhibition.



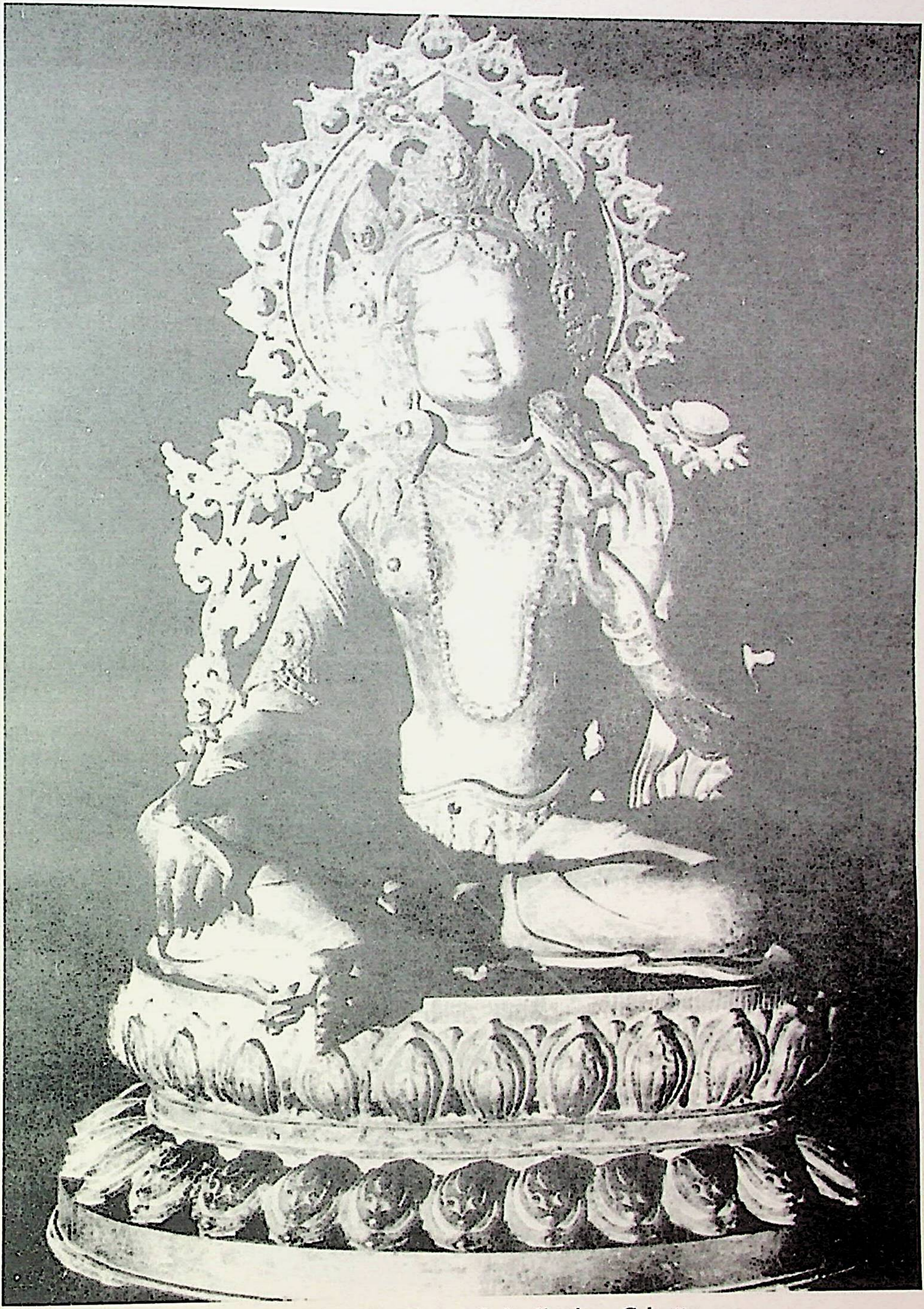
38. Tara from Bengal - 11th cent. Ashutosh Museum - Calcutta.



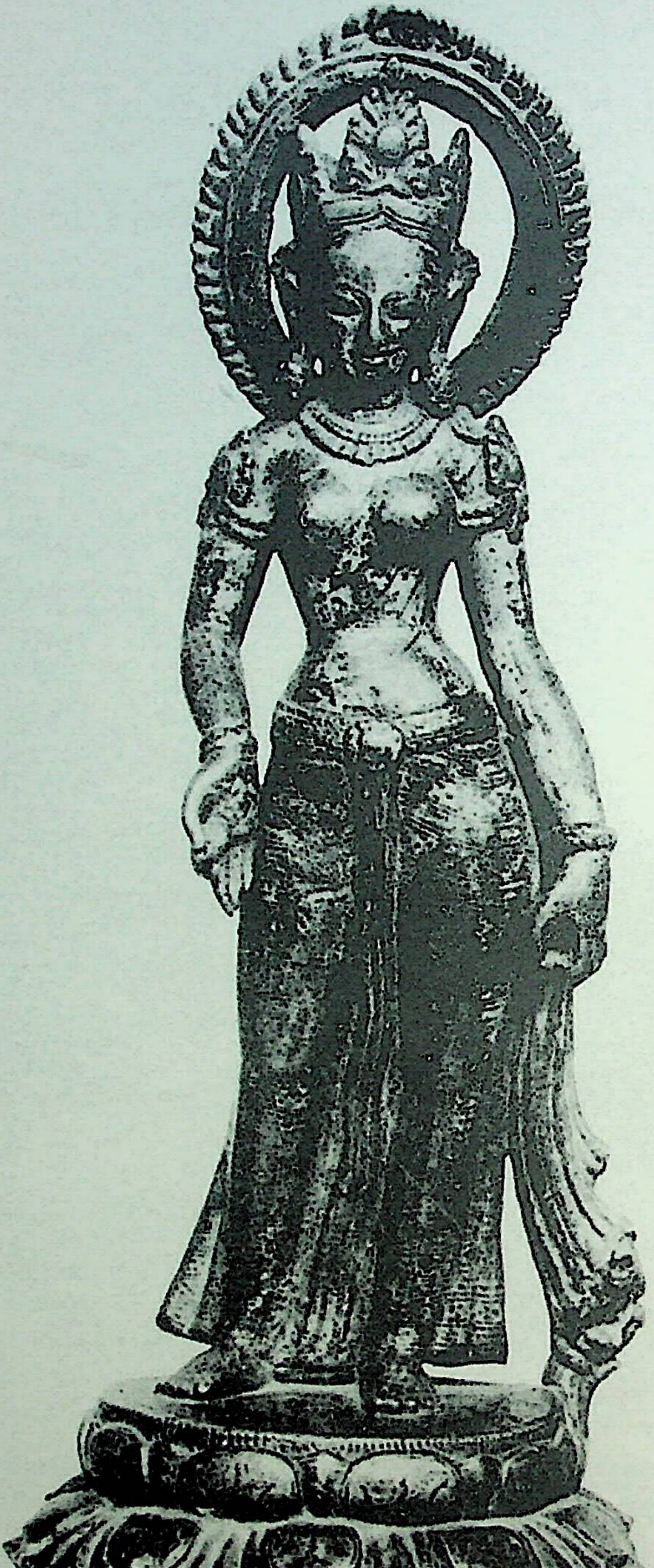
39. Tara - (gilted) Nepal. Indian Museum - Calcutta.



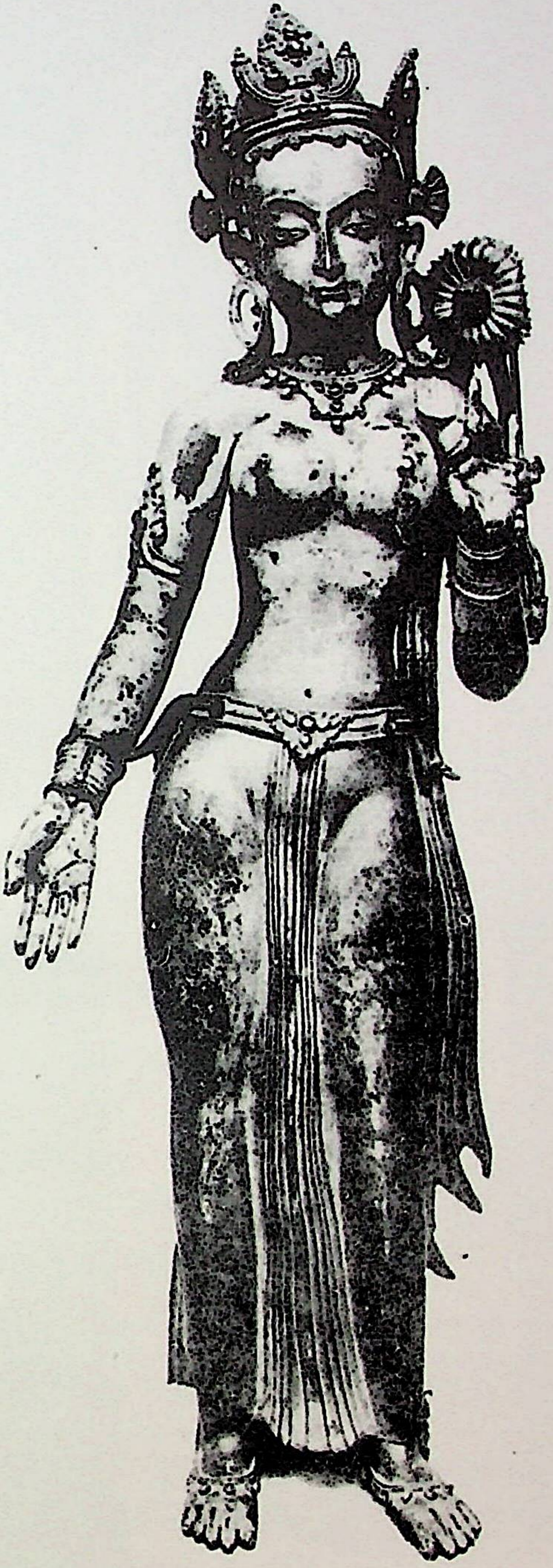
40. White Tara - Bronze - Nepal.



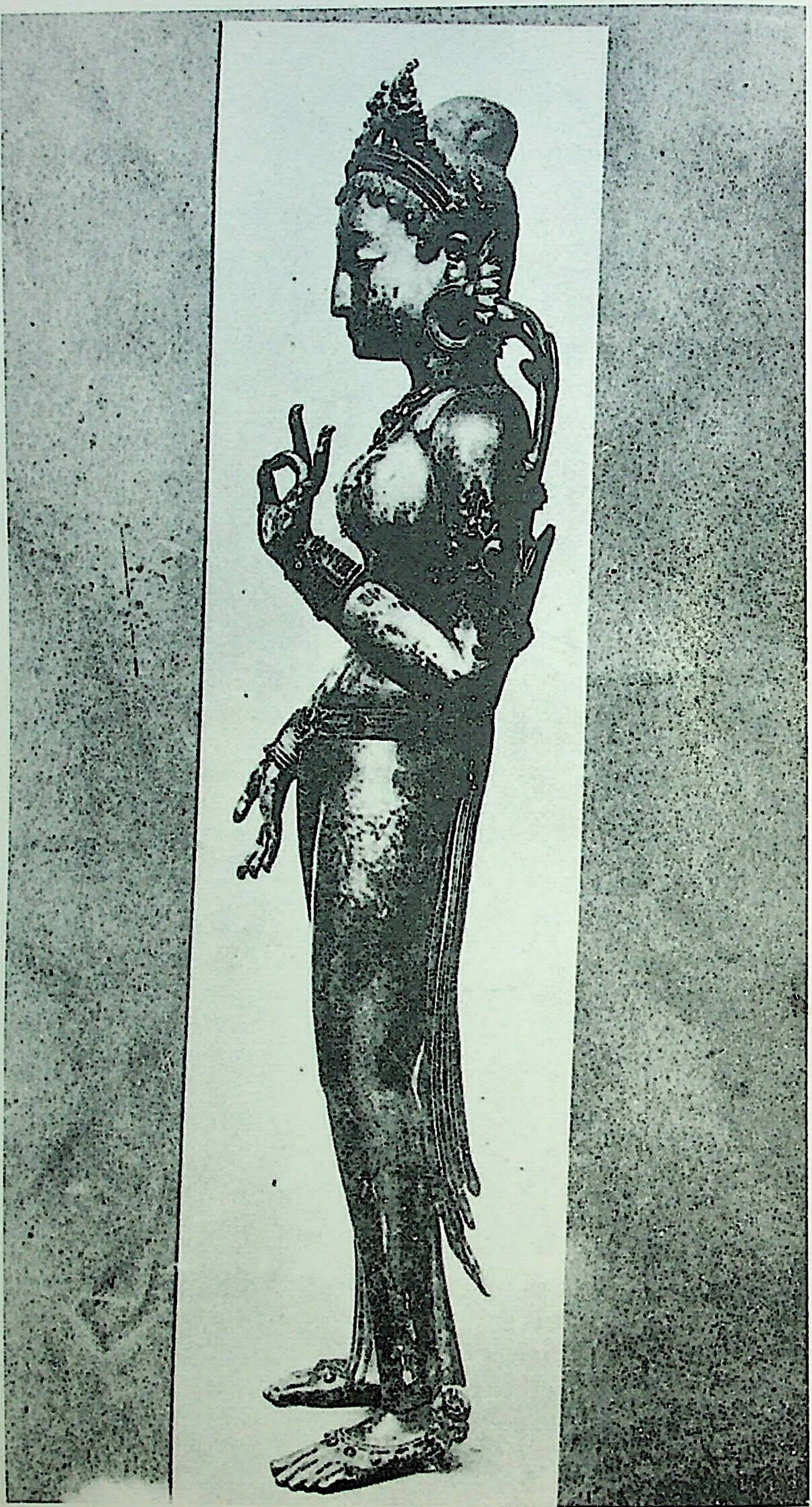
41. Tara (Nepal) - Chaman Lal collection - Calcutta.



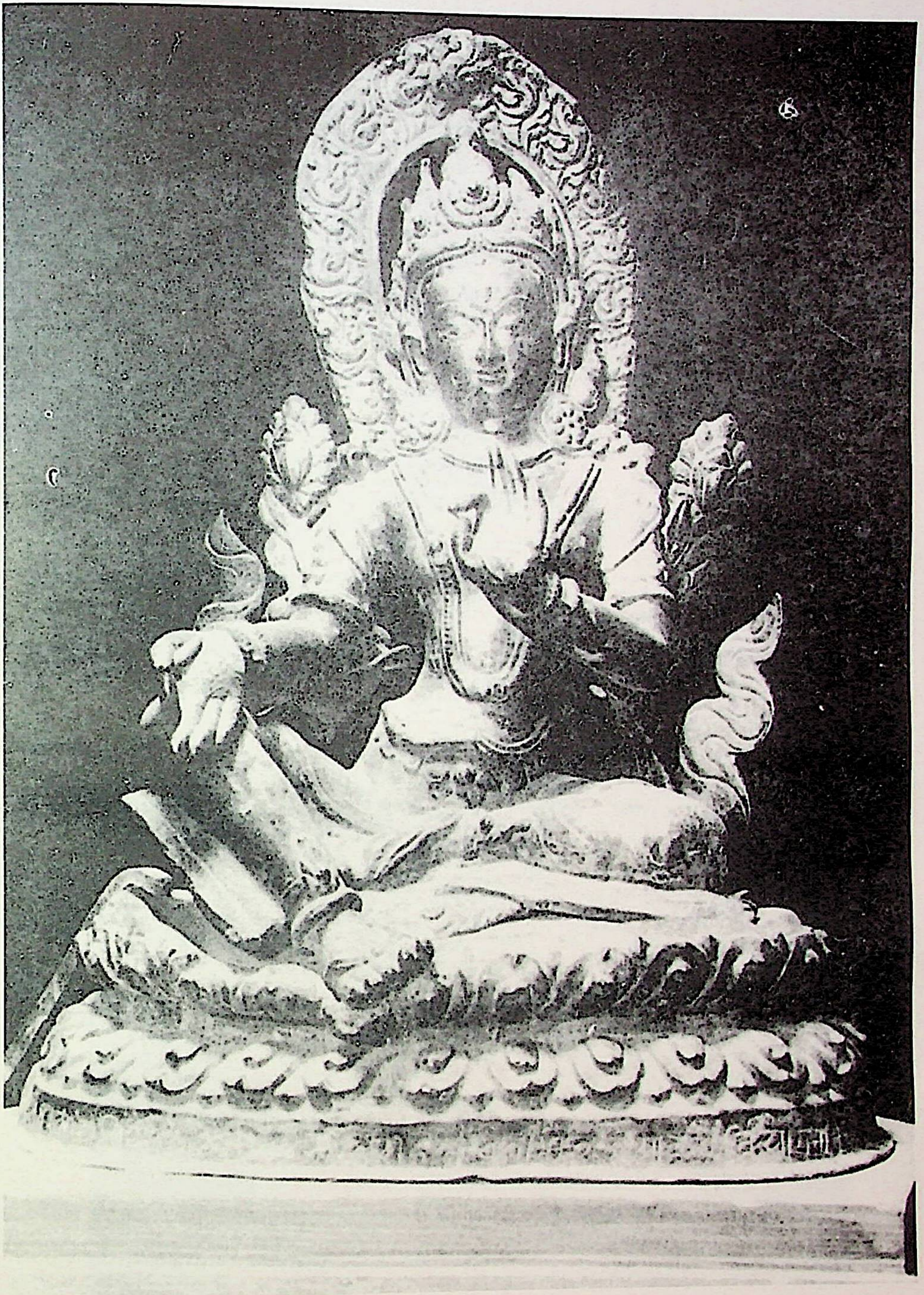
42. Tara - Nepal, 14th century Brithish Museum - London.



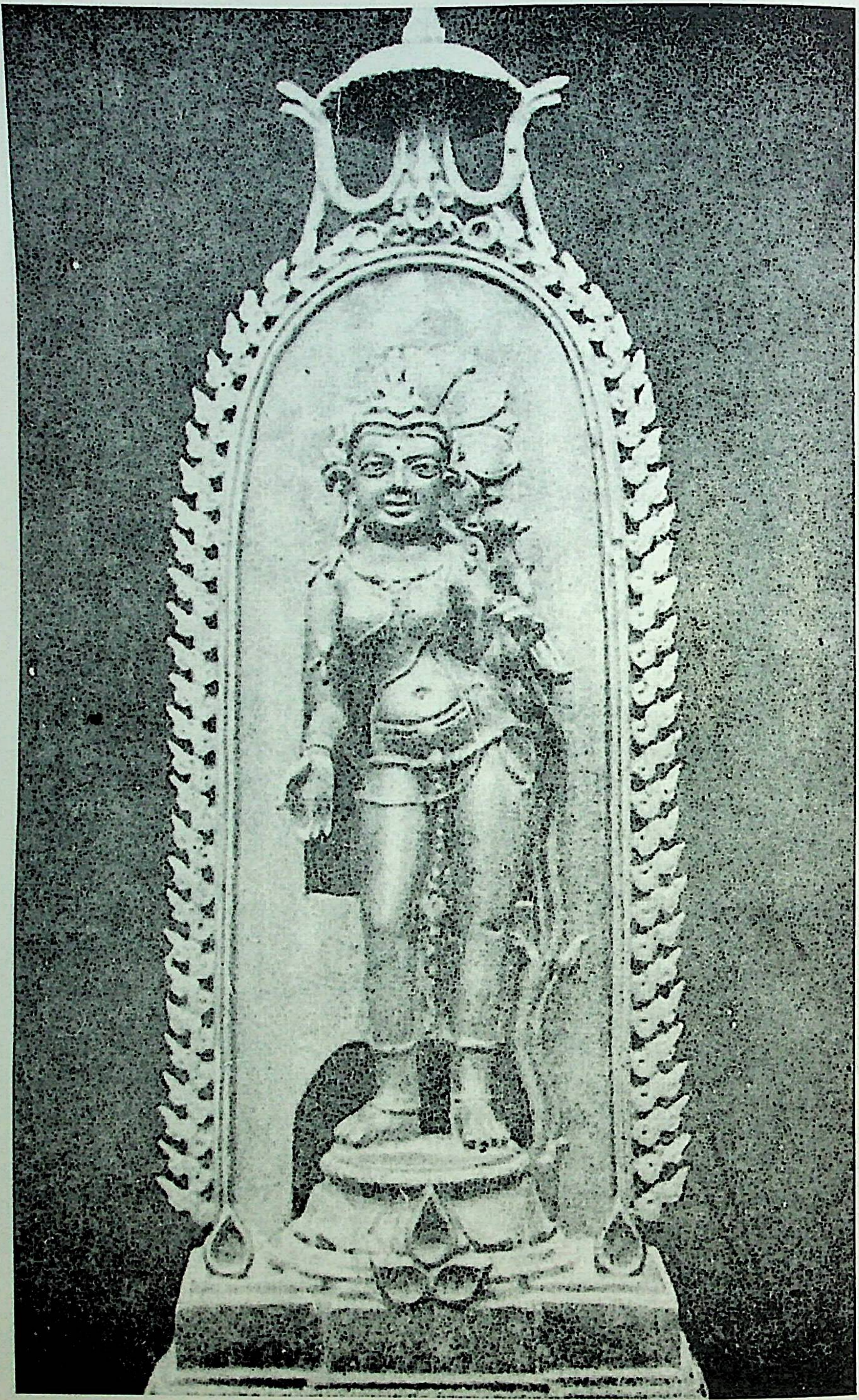
43. Tara - Nepal, 15th century Victoria Albert Museum - London



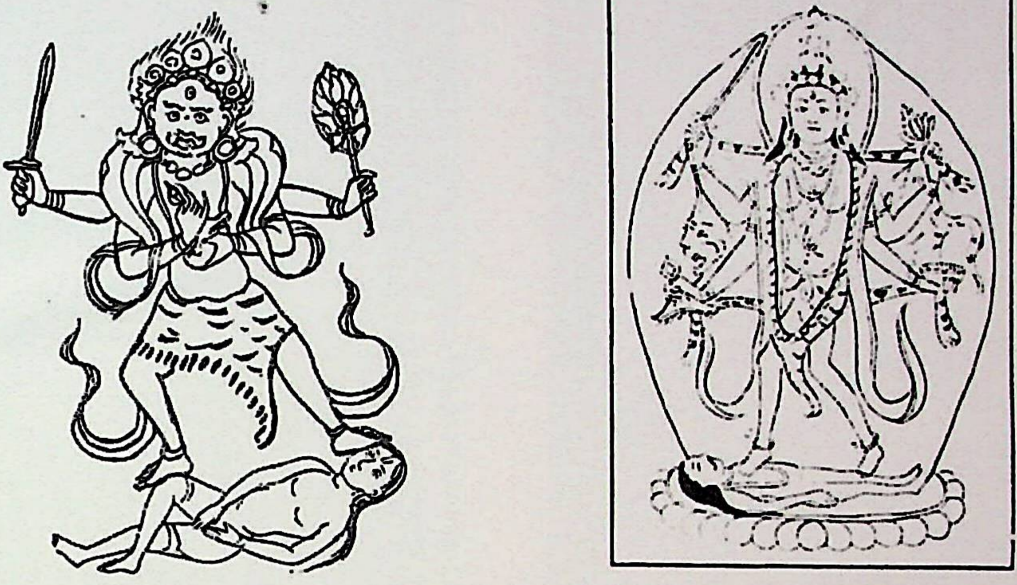
44. Tara - 16th century Nepal. Victoria Albert Museum - London.



45. Tara - Nepal. 18th Century.



46. Tara - standing - Bihar.



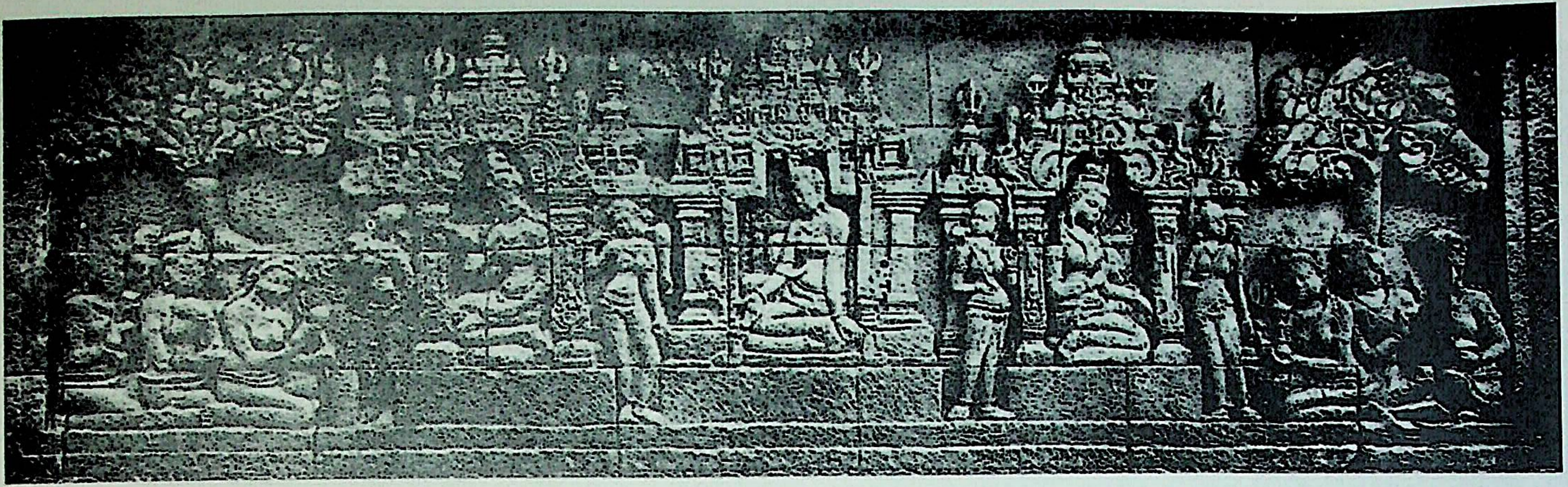
(a) Mahācīna Tara

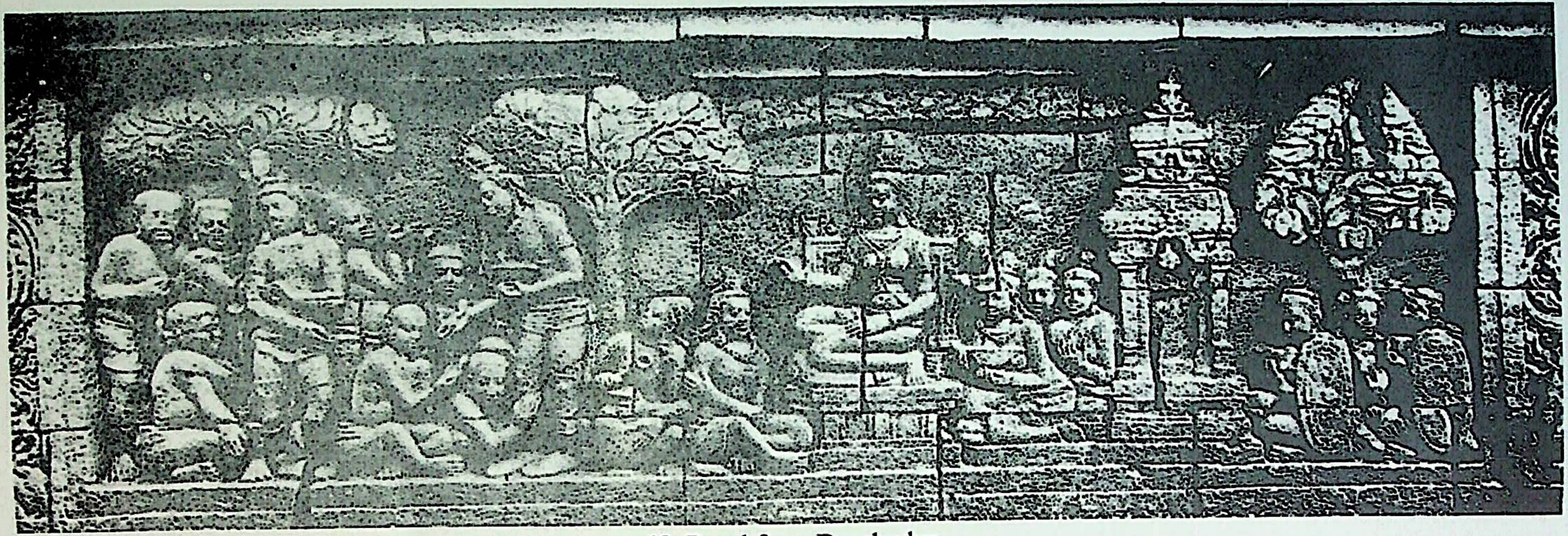
(b) Mahācīna Tara

a. Bhadrāsana Tārā

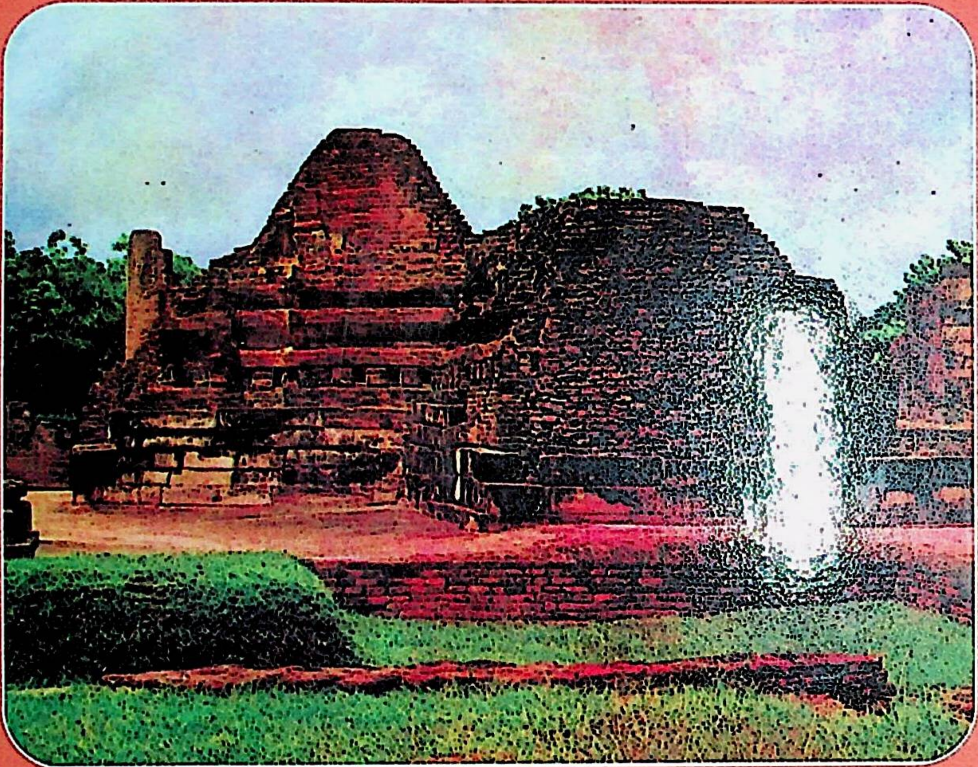
b. Sadbhuja-Sitatārā

47. Diagrama of Mahachina Taras





48. Panel from Borobudur



BHARATIYA VIDYA PRAKASHAN
C.K. 32/30, Nepali Khapra, Kachauri Gali, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh-221001
Ph. : 0542-2392376, 2392378 | Mob. : 09415202477, 9453040794, 7985892725
E-mail : arunjainbvp@gmail.com

1. 5824, New Chandrawal (Near Shiv Mandir), Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110007
Ph. : 011-23851570 | Mob. : 8700588570, 9968334546

2. B-32-E-10/8784, New Azad Nagar, Bahadur Ke Road, Ludhiana (Punjab)
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Finance Office :
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